



VIRTUAL WORLD: CLOSE COMBAT MAGE

BOOK 03

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Virtual World: Close Combat Mage

(网游之近战法师)

by

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Synopsis

Due to a mistake on his student's part, a super Martial Artist had received a wrong class in an online game and had become a mage. He who was used to curbing violence with violence and using strength to subdue strength could only make the best out of his mistake. Taking on a new lease in life, he became a violent close combat mage. When strength and magic came perfectly together, a new gaming path had been opened by him!

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 201 - Putting on a show

“Everyone, the Mage of the hour will be here soon,” Brother Assist announced as he swept his gaze over to the crowd before him, whispering to Young Master Han after, “The ones who should be here are not here, yet many of those who shouldn’t be here are here.”

“Are you referring to Carouse and Cloud Herder’s people?” Young Master Han asked, chuckling.

Brother Assist nodded his head.

“If someone of Carouse is really planning to come, do you think I’ll be able to calmly sit here? I will not even be here if that’s the case!” Young Master Han continued to chuckle.

“What happened?” Brother Assist inquired.

“I’m not too sure, but it seems that Miles has already met Brave Surge,” Young Master Han answered.

“The same goes for Cloud Herder, I guess! To think that their flyers actually worked,” Brother Assist was very surprised.

Young Master Han shrugged his shoulders.

Brother Assist looked around once more, saying to Young Master Han, “I’ve spotted some familiar-looking faces that are acting furtive, as if they don’t wanna call attention to themselves.”

Young Master Han nodded his head, “I’ve spotted them as well.” The two men instinctively gazed over to these few people who were trying lie low among the many attendees for their current ‘event’.

“Let’s stop minding them and just focus on this conference!” Young Master Han said.

Brother Assist nodded his head and signaled War Without Wounds. War Without Wounds stepped away from the dimly lit

corner that he had been staying in, causing the voices in bar to die down.

“What is that? Is it a pet?”

“I’ve never heard that there is a pet system in Parallel World!”

Everyone started to talk again, but the topic of their conversations was now the strange creature before them: War Without Wounds. Truly, his mismatched outfit was just too bizarre a sight. Since this was a VRMMO, physical appearance was a major concern for every player. While it was important for equipment to have decent stats, the equipment’s designs should also appeal to the public’s aesthetic taste. Right now, War Without Wounds was like a piece of abstract art painting in the eyes of others – unable to be described.

Royal God Call laughed until he was bending over, drawing the attention of a few people. Among these few people was Oathless Sword who promptly called out to him, “Royal, what are you doing here?” A guild leader might not necessarily know every member of his or her guild, but given Royal God Call’s fame in the online gaming community, Oathless Sword had been keeping an eye on him. In fact, Oathless Sword would have invited him to be a core member of Traversing Four Seas had it not been for Royal God Call’s young age and the fact that the latter was not playing a Mage, the job class that he was best at.

Royal God Call accidentally exposed himself due to his extreme glee, but he quickly turned the tables on Oathless Sword, “Eh?! Guild leader you’re here, too? Do you also wish to know that Mage? Why didn’t you ask me directly?! I know him as well.”

Royal God Call was no longer worried about revealing this to Oathless Sword as the latter had already paid the fee.

Oathless Sword did not really feel much regret at having paid a measly sum of 100 gold coins. Instead, he was happy to learn that he had a guild member that personally knew the Mage, as it would

open doors to broaching the subject of recruitment. The many leaders present in this meeting would certainly be able to meet the Mage and some of them might even be able to add him as a friend, but they would be hard pressed to open the topic of recruitment to the Mage.

War Without Wounds was in great distress right now for garnering such a reaction from the players in the bar just by appearing before them. Brother Assist came forward and sympathetically patted his shoulders, “You’ll get extra compensation for this.”

War Without Wounds gritted his teeth and steeled his heart. Ignoring the shame he was feeling, he swaggered like always toward the bar entrance. They had already planned this beforehand; once Gu Fei came through the door, War Without Wounds would grab a hold of his shoulder to prevent him from escaping.

“Ray! Lock the other door!” Brother Assist said to Ray. The bar had two sets of doors, one on the left and one on the right. War Without Wounds was currently guarding the right door.

Ray nodded his head. He could do this as the owner of the establishment, yet his action of locking the left door made many leaders suspicious. Guarding the right door and locking the left door. No matter how one looked at it, this seemed like a trap set to kill them off in one go. The leaders with rich fighting experience, and especially those who tried to hide themselves earlier immediately went on guard. They were even thinking of bolting out before anything could happen.

Brother Assist totally did not expect everyone to be alarmed by their actions, so he tried as best as he could to come up with a reasonable explanation for it, “It’s just to ensure that we are not interrupted by uninvolved people. You guys paid for this information. Wouldn’t it be unfair to you all if someone accidentally barges in on us and freely gets to hear this

information as well?” He would of course never mention to them that they were actually doing this to prevent the product from running away.

All the leaders easily accepted this reasoning and no longer paid attention to Ray locking the door; instead, they turned their attention to the bizarre-looking War Without Wounds who was guarding the left door.

It was at this point that the left door creaked open, and a Mage dressed in black robe appeared before the waiting crowd. The leaders eagerly studied the Mage’s appearance, but his face was unfortunately covered.

Those who personally knew Gu Fei could tell at a glance that it was him. Brother Assist could not fathom why Gu Fei was covering his face, but he still signaled War Without Wounds with a furtive glance.

“Ha ha! Why are you here?!” War Without Wounds warmly extended his arms to clutch Gu Fei’s shoulders.

Unexpectedly, Gu Fei dodged War Without Wounds’ outstretched arms and stared at him with wide eyes, “Who are you?”

“It’s me!” War Without Wounds hurriedly said to Gu Fei.

“What’s up with your getup?” Gu Fei asked, perplexed.

“It’s a long story,” War Without Wounds coughed as he tried to grab him once more, yet Gu Fei dodged his hands again and approached Brother Assist, “Why did you call for me?” Brother Assist was about to speak when Gu Fei shot his hand out to stop him, “Wait for me in the usual private room; I’ll go in once I’m done with my business.”

“Ahh... What business is it?” Brother Assist froze.

Gu Fei tossed 1 gold coin to Ray who felt stunned upon seeing his familiar action. Gu Fei then flipped over a bench and pulled out his

sword, “‘Bounty Mission’! Please leave if you’re not involved!”

The whole venue came alive at once. Each of them was an influential figure in Yunduan City, so they had long heard of a Mage passionately doing ‘Bounty Mission’. Rumors had it that his skill was top-notch and that he had never lost his bounty. Some even wanted to recruit him right away, but this Mage was so occupied with chasing his ‘Bounty Mission’ targets that even catching a glimpse of him was hard. A few individuals who had luckily encountered the Mage in the middle of doing ‘Bounty Mission’ would patiently wait for him to finish his business to exchange a few words after. But once he was done with his mission and just as they were getting ready to greet him, the Mage would actually disappear in a white glow.

Nobody knew that there was a ‘Bounty Mission’ accessory called Windchaser’s Emblem that could teleport its wearer to the Bounty Assignment Hall, so those who had seen this scene actually thought that the Mage had used a teleportation scroll to leave the place after finishing his ‘Bounty Mission’, which thoroughly impressed them of his dedication and extravagance.

Looking at Brother Assist and his companions’ expression, all could tell that the Close Combat Mage 27149 that they had been waiting for was this black-clothed Mage. While Gu Fei’s acquaintances could recognize him just from his body frame and attire, those who were not that familiar with him, like Drifting, only identified Gu Fei upon seeing him toss 1 gold coin and shout out “‘Bounty Mission’!” Drifting smiled at this, “It truly is him.” Another person who met Gu Fei through this bounty hunting was Silver Moon, and it was at this very moment that Silver Moon connected the dots from this current scene to that episode back in Yueye City.

Gu Fei’s action shocked everyone present, especially when he mindlessly pointed his sword at several directions to distract his real target, “It’s you! Can everyone kindly make way please!”

Nobody knew who was his actual target, and those with PK points on them felt that he was targeting them instead. Even those who did not have any PK value on them were so shocked by him that they were all subconsciously trying to get out of his way.

There were not many top experts in the online gaming community, and it would be too coincidental for all of them to spawn in Yunduan City and become guild or mercenary leaders. Being a guild leader did not equate to having superb fighting ability, and their strength lay more on spotting a talent among the crowd. Not having indomitable fighting prowess and coming in this conference unaccompanied, it was hardly surprising that these leaders did not feel safe to be in the presence of the legendary Insta-kill Mage.

“Make way! Make way! Spells do not discriminate among people!” Gu Fei showily flourished his sword about as he started chanting a spell. This caused everyone to become even more flustered. Bars were a place where people had to share a limited space with others. If a Mage were to cast an AOE spell, the result would therefore be disastrous.

“Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno! Arise!” Gu Fei chose a random spot to point and chanted, causing everyone to scamper away. Gu Fei’s chanting was just a hoax, though. He had used Zhao San Mu Si while chanting the spell, so his sword tip had pointed to over a dozen spots at once. As such, even the most experienced players among the crowd could not determine where the inferno would spring forth.

The top-class Mage, Drifting, could tell that the spell would not be unleashed with a sword dancing so wildly like that. During spell-casting, a Mage must point a hand or a staff to a fixed spot to unleash a spell. With how Gu Fei was waving his sword about as he chanted, Drifting was certain that the spell was a dud.

Drifting was not the only one who could tell that Gu Fei’s move was a bluff. Out of everyone in the bar, Traversing Four Seas’ three

men, The Black Hand mercenary group leader Black Index Finger, Silver Moon, Yueye City's Dusky Cloud and company, and a few other guild leaders calmly remained on their seats.

Besides them, the four Amethyst Rebirth ladies also remained unperturbed. They believed that their relationship with Gu Fei was strong enough for him to simply let them off the hook if one of them ever happened to be his 'Bounty Mission' target.

Chapter 202 - A Huge Mess

Only a minority of the present players could see through Gu Fei's bluff, and a majority of them were completely taken in by his Zhao San Mu Si. Feeling that Gu Fei had cast the spell on their very feet, the whole bar lost any semblance of order as many leaders scampered about to dodge the incoming spell.

Just as Drifting was regarding the flustered leaders contemptuously, Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno flared into existence in the middle of the bar.

The spell's AOE only extended to the center of the bar, so the fleeing players were able to escape to the side unscathed. Only a handful of players got blasted by the spell and they were mainly made up of those who had thought that they had seen through Gu Fei's wild gestures. These people included the number one Mage Drifting, the four Amethyst Rebirth ladies, and The Black Hand mercenary group leader Black Index Finger.

The four Amethyst Rebirth ladies freaked out for a bit, thinking that their death was unavoidable given Gu Fei's high Spell Damage. But when they unexpectedly remained relatively fine, they became very perplexed.

As for Drifting, he was trying to figure out how the spell had successfully been cast despite Gu Fei's wild flailing of his sword, and he began to thoroughly inspect himself. The Black Hand mercenary group leader, for his part, promptly checked his HP and subsequently sneered, "You call this the Insta-kill Mage?"

They were not the only people who had gotten burned by the spell. When these other players heard Black Index Finger's words, they immediately checked their HP and were shocked. The damage they had received from this Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno was far lower than the damage output of a naked level 40 Mage's spell. It was indeed too farfetched to claim that Gu Fei could insta-

kill someone based on the low Spell Damage he displayed just now.

‘Insta-kill Mage’ was how Brother Assist had promoted Gu Fei in his posts on the forums. Many of the present people had been drawn to this conference due to those two words, but now that they had experienced Gu Fei’s Spell Damage for themselves, the surrounding players grew extremely agitated as they assumed that they had been scammed by Brother Assist. Calling him a liar, everyone demanded a refund upfront. Some players even asked Brother Assist for a deathmatch. The scene quickly descended into chaos.

This was entirely outside Brother Assist’s realm of calculation. Seeing so many people brandishing their swords, sabers, bows, and staves threateningly at him, Brother Assist hurriedly raised his hands to appease the crowd, “Please don’t be so hasty, everyone. Let’s calmly talk about this.”

“What’s there to talk about?!” someone bellowed, “We’ve already experienced what his spell is capable of! That’s nowhere near enough to actually insta-kill someone at all!”

The men refused to be pacified. After all, they now had solid proof of the falsity of Brother Assist’s claim after getting hit by Gu Fei’s spell. As for those players who had escaped Gu Fei’s Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno, they immediately asked the enraged men about Gu Fei’s Spell Damage. In a matter of minutes, dissatisfaction spread throughout the crowd in the bar.

Brother Assist was absolutely certain that Gu Fei’s Spell Damage could insta-kill many people, but it was also irrefutable that the latter’s recently released Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno had weak damage output. But as an acclaimed information expert, he was able to easily deduce what had just happened: While it was hard for weak players to suddenly get stronger in MMOs, it was actually very easy for the stronger players to slightly weaken their own Attack Power, and one of the way was through removing their weapons that greatly boosted their damage output.

The troubled Brother Assist thought of this as he gazed at Gu Fei. Despite his face being covered, Gu Fei's twinkling eyes could clearly be seen. Brother Assist blanched as he exclaimed to himself, F*ck! I got sabotaged!

“Miles bro, don't mess around. You almost caused my death!” Brother Assist hurriedly sent Gu Fei this private message.

[The player you're trying to contact is temporarily unavailable.] the system expressed.

Sh*t! He came prepared! Brother Assist almost coughed up blood.

Covering his face, intentionally casting a weak spell, and even blocking any incoming messages... Gu Fei had clearly seen through Brother Assist's plan and had purposely messed things up for him. Brother Assist watched helplessly as the hoard of leaders before him became more and more enraged. “You are all leaders or influential figures in our city! How am I going to live peacefully in this city from here onward if this is truly an attempt to scam you all out of your money?” was what he had said previously to eliminate the doubts of everyone, and in the eyes of the others, it seemed that he had done just that at the moment.

Guess I will have to abscond from this city! Brother Assist was in tears as this thought filled his head. Unexpectedly, someone stood up in his defense, “Everyone, please hold your horses!”

The one who had spoken was Young Master Han. But given the sort of people gathered in the bar today, Young Master Han held no sway to them. Some arrogant leaders even pointed to him and yelled, “Just who do you think you are?!”

At the same time, Brother Assist received a private message from Young Master Han: “I request to be given a bigger share of the pot if I manage to resolve your predicament.”

“Taking advantage of me while I'm in trouble?” They were both gaming experts after all, so their messaging speed was even faster

than actual speech. Brother Assist might be lacking in other aspects as a player, but he was truly top-notch when it came to chatting, with his replying speed being faster than Blink.

Young Master Han did not respond to that; instead, his eyes steadily made contact with Brother Assist's while smiling faintly.

Brother Assist was clueless to Young Master Han's plan, so he could only nod his head to the latter.

"Ahem!" Young Master Han cleared his throat and raised his voice above the leaders' din, "Hear me out first!"

"What's there to explain?!" The men demanded angrily.

"Listen!" Young Master Han suddenly bellowed, "That man is absolutely not the Insta-kill Mage we want to introduce you guys to."

The whole bar suddenly became quiet. Even Gu Fei looked at Young Master Han in surprise.

"Who is he, then?" someone skeptically asked.

"How do I know? I don't know him. Perhaps, he's here to sabotage us?" Young Master Han innocently replied.

This guy is really vicious and cunning! Brother Assist cried out in his heart. Basically, Young Master Han was implying that someone was trying to sully Brother Assist's good name by making it seem that he had cheated the others of their money, and that someone was the 'unknown' Mage before them.

Naturally, quite a few leaders would want to hold Gu Fei accountable for this ruckus. And once Gu Fei retaliated against his attackers, his true colors would get revealed and the matter would subsequently be resolved. After all, none of these leaders would still be angry at Brother Assist once they realized Gu Fei was truly capable of insta-killing the others. Right now, what was unknown was whose poor soul would get sacrificed to uncover this truth. Brother Assist sympathetically gazed at the crowd before him as he

thought up to this point. It all boiled down to who among them was angrier at Gu Fei's earlier stunt.

Young Master Han's plan was not complicated, so Brother Assist was not the only one who could figure it out. Gu Fei had also seen through his intention. In the end, he simply said to the two with a slight smile on his lips, "I won't attack even if I die."

Young Master Han smiled faintly as well, "Then, go to hell!"

Young Master Han claimed that they were not acquainted with the masked man, yet now they were talking to each other. The people present were no fools so they immediately questioned them, "You guys are supposed to not know each other, right?"

"That's right! We don't know each other," Young Master Han replied.

"Then, what were you two talking about?" someone asked.

"Your 'mum'!" Young Master Han answered.

"WHAT DID YOU SAY?!" the person bellowed in anger.

"Weren't you asking us what we were talking about?" Young Master Han asked innocently.

The person who had asked the question was left speechless. What happened next was even more outside of Brother Assist's expectation... .

Knowing that many of the present people were eager to beat Gu Fei up, Silver Moon, who had been maintaining silence all this while, suddenly said, "Everyone, please don't be rash. Let's just turn a blind eye over this weak Mage who has suddenly barged in for now. He's all surrounded now, so there's no way for him to run, anyway. Don't forget; we didn't spend 100 gold coins today just to fight here, so I think it's better to get Brother Assist to invite this Insta-kill Mage out!" He then looked at Brother Assist and the gang with eyes full of loathing and malice.

Actually, from the way these ‘event organizers’ greeted the ‘weak Mage’ just then, everyone could already tell that those people knew one another, and that the Mage was probably the one that the gang had wanted to introduce to everyone. Who knew that things would come to this point where Young Master Han would vehemently deny his connection with Gu Fei? Given the fast development of the situation, hardly any people could connect the dots yet. Silver Moon coldly observed this proceeding, and unlike the others that had their focus shifting from person to person, his attention had remained on Gu Fei.

Just from the verbal exchange between Gu Fei and Young Master Han, Silver Moon more or less got the full picture of the situation and deduced that some sort of conflict must have transpired between the ‘weak Mage’ and ‘the event organizers’. With Gu Fei’s refusal to admit that he was the Insta-kill Mage and Young Master Han’s denial of their connection, these few people in charge of the event would probably be branded as scammers and would swiftly be annihilated by all the leaders in Yunduan City if they were unable to present the so-called ‘Insta-kill Mage’ right at this moment – an outcome that Silver Moon would thoroughly relish.

To think that the opportunity for revenge would come this soon, Silver Moon gleefully thought to himself as his mouth formed a sinister smile.

Brother Assist noticed how Silver Moon had tried to calm down the enraged crowd earlier, and his heart tightened when he saw the latter smirking at a corner.

Young Master Han had judged Silver Moon’s character correctly: He was indeed a very shrewd person. He knew that Young Master’s Elite was his arch-nemesis, yet he never showed it in his action. Seeing a chance for revenge, he had pounced on it and viciously bit hard on it. This one bite was rather fatal. If they were unable to present the Insta-kill Mage to the crowd, they would be featured on the forums the next day as swindlers and their reputations

would be ruined by this one incident.

Right now, we could only hope that Miles would intervene, Brother Assist thought to himself, as he gazed imploringly at Gu Fei.

Gu Fei had naturally caught on to Silver Moon's nasty plot. Although he had no wish to become a moneymaker for others, he could simply not allow such a villainous man to succeed. Finding a trade-off between the two, Gu Fei resolved to insta-kill Silver Moon with one move, even at the price of revealing his identity as the Insta-kill Mage. Everything else that followed could be discussed at a later period.

Just as he was about to make his move, Young Master Han spoke up once more. Even when he was in such a dire straits, Young Master Han's tone remained measured and languid, "Everyone, you've actually seen the Insta-kill Mage just now without realizing it. He is one of the Five Unyielding Experts and Parallel World's number one Mage, Drifting!" Young Master Han said this emphatically as he pointed to the seated Drifting who was calmly watching the proceeding.

"Oh..." Brother Assist came to a sudden realization upon this reveal. It turned out that Young Master Han's earlier words to Gu Fei were not a threat uttered out of anger but the truth instead. He judged that Drifting was the perfect alternative candidate for the title of the Insta-kill Mage.

Was Drifting capable of insta-killing others, though? Although they had known him as one of the Five Unyielding Experts, none of the present people had actually seen Drifting in action. Given that there was not much difference in the levels of the current players, the ability to insta-kill others depended entirely on an individual's equipment and spell proficiency. Drifting happened to have a higher level than every person in the bar, so Brother Assist and the others could not appraise his equipment and make a judgment of his might as a Mage.

Meanwhile, Drifting, whose name was suddenly shoved to the limelight, dumbly gazed at Young Master Han.

Everyone once more descended into silence. Young Master Han did his best to give everyone an introduction, “I’m sure that all of you are familiar with the name Drifting, since he has always been ranked first on the Mage leaderboard. But I believe that not many of you are aware that he is currently in Yunduan City, right? To actually get to meet a living legend... You should all feel that the money you’ve paid is well worth it!”

“B*llsh*t! He’s nothing but a shi*ty Mage!” Royal God Call was aware of their dire situation, yet the youth was ultimately more sensitive than sensible. He was utterly discontented to see his adversary being raised high up on the pedestal, so he shouted this without caring for the consequences.

Young Master Han was unperturbed by Royal God Call’s outburst and merely addressed Oathless Sword, “Guild Leader Oathless, you should grab this wild child of your guild and chastise him properly. This rascal has always been in conflict with Drifting. He knows very well that Drifting is in town, yet he never once saw it fit to inform you.”

The animosity between Royal God Call and Drifting, the two renowned Mage users in MMOs, was a well-documented fact known by many well-informed players. Everyone easily accepted Young Master Han’s words after seeing that Royal God Call was indeed just a youngster. Everyone merely viewed Royal God Call as a child throwing a tantrum even as the latter kept on shouting “B*llsh*t!”

The whole place once more returned to a state of tranquility as Brother Assist surveyed everything with incredulity, Is the situation really resolved just like that?

Chapter 203 - Mission accomplished!

With the situation in the bar restored to a state of normality, all the leaders began to privately collect their thoughts. Many of them promptly tried adding Drifting as a friend and expectedly received the [Player Drifting is currently not accepting any friend request.] system prompt. Those who were sitting near Drifting even started to strike a conversation with him.

Of course, with how War Without Wounds had greeted Gu Fei earlier and how Gu Fei had exchanged furtive glances with Brother Assist, the others could not shake off the feeling that these people actually knew one another. Still, it was true that their payment of 100 gold coins was well worth it if they could get to know the number one Mage in Parallel World, Drifting. Now that the crowd had calmed down and recalled the purpose of their visit, they realized that the important thing to do now was to interact with Drifting before anyone else had the chance to do so. All the other matters could take a back seat.

Despite Drifting becoming the focal point of this conference, he oddly remained unresponsive. Suddenly, he raised his hand with his five fingers upright and waved it toward Young Master Han and Brother Assist, as if he was greeting them.

Brother Assist was momentarily stunned by his action. It seemed that Drifting was willing to act his part in this charade and was even reassuring them. What a great guy! Brother Assist felt immensely touched and he quickly waved his hand back at Drifting. However, Drifting completely ignored him.

Next to Brother Assist, Young Master Han raised his hand as well and waved it slightly, his three fingers at attention.

Almost immediately, Drifting retracted his thumb with only his four fingers remaining upright.

In response, Young Master Han retracted his ring finger and left

his forefinger and middle finger upright.

Drifting handily retracted three fingers, left just his forefinger up, and wagged it toward Young Master Han before putting his hand down.

All the players saw Drifting waving his hand to greet the two event organizers, but none of them noticed Young Master Han sneakily answering back. Only Brother Assist, who was right beside Young Master Han, witnessed their whole exchange. When the two finished their finger gesturing, Brother Assist asked, “What was that all about?”

Young Master Han began to explain, “He asked for 5000 gold coins, and I rebutted with 3000 gold coins.”

Brother Assist began to piece everything together, “So when he asked for 4000 gold coins, you gave him the price of 2000 gold coins?”

Young Master Han nodded his head.

“Then... He voluntarily dropped his price to only 1000 gold coins?” Brother Assist could not understand this part.

“That finger movement means that we will discuss this matter after this,” Young Master Han corrected.

“Do you guys know each other?” Brother Assist asked. It was hard to imagine two perfect strangers being able to successfully communicate with each other using their fingers alone.

“No, we don’t. This is just a matter of IQ,” Young Master Han said matter-of-factly, leaving Brother Assist quite dejected.

After all their finger gesturing, Drifting was now gamely playing his role. He even took the initiative to stand up before anyone could discern the true nature of his relationship with Young Master’s Elite and addressed the crowd, “This is my first time in Yunduan City, so I hope that everyone here will take good care of me from here onward.”

“Of course! That is to be expected!” all the leaders eagerly agreed to his request. Everyone present was rather prominent in Yunduan City, but that was still nothing compared to Drifting, whose name was well-known throughout Parallel World. If an unknown player was the Insta-kill Mage, all these leaders could still dream of successfully headhunting him. But since the Insta-kill Mage turned out to be such a huge character, at least half of them understood that their chances of recruiting Drifting were slim and nearly zero. Only Oathless Sword, the guild leader of Traversing Four Seas, which was the largest guild in Yunduan City, was extremely happy at this turn of events. He believed that out of all the leaders present in the conference, he had the best chance at recruiting Drifting.

As an experienced gamer that was often in the limelight, Drifting was able to easily handle the attention of all these influential figures and to casually socialize with them. But despite Drifting’s excellent social skills, mingling with everyone was still not possible for him, and this resulted into quite a few people being left high and dry. All the present leaders were distinguished by their own right, so none of them could stand being disregarded by anyone, even someone as popular as Drifting.

These people were of course feeling unhappy at having spent 100 gold coins without managing to acquaint themselves with the number one Mage, but they were not so unreasonable that they would blame this outcome on Young Master’s Elite. But Silver Moon could see just how frustrating they were feeling inside, and he was currently scheming on causing everyone to get mad at Young Master’s Elite once more.

Silver Moon had attempted to sabotage the ‘meet and greet’ event by getting everyone to view Young Master’s Elite as a common enemy earlier, and in the end it was the many leaders who were treating one another as enemies instead since they were all competing to get close to Drifting. When his plan had fallen through, Silver Moon had gone back to quietly observing the

situation. Seeing the few disregarded leaders' desire to vent their frustration on someone, he knew that he had found another opportunity to create trouble for Young Master's Elite and hurriedly cleared his throat, "Ahem. I say, there's no doubt that Drifting is the number one Mage—"

"Number one, my foot!" Royal God Call indignantly interjected.

"Mhm-mhm. I know that Royal bro was also very glorious back then..." Silver Moon threw a half-hearted flattery at Royal God Call. He tried to divert everyone's attention from Drifting by pointing directly at Gu Fei and saying, "I don't know what this guy's intentions are, but he was making a scene just now by claiming to do a 'Bounty Mission'. Somehow, I got the feeling that he is well acquainted with you all based on the interactions you lot were having just now!"

The way Gu Fei suddenly barged into the bar and how the rest of Young Master's Elite greeted him earlier were very suspicious, and Silver Moon kindly reminded the dissatisfied leaders of this fact, so that they could have a valid reason to vent their built-up resentment toward these few 'event organizers'.

Given that a few of the present leaders had pretty terrible personalities to begin with, Silver Moon easily succeeded at enticing them. They immediately latched on to his words and once more pointed accusing fingers at Brother Assist and friends, "That's right! We demand an explanation for this matter. Just what is going on here?! That Mage clearly talked to you guys when he came in, so how come you all claim to not know who he is?"

Brother Assist did not know how to answer the person's question, and it was the expressionless Young Master Han who replied, "When did talking equate to knowing each other? You're talking to me right now, but do you know who I am?"

The person was briefly taken aback by this statement. Since the man he had instigated proved to be a weak hand, the clever Silver

Moon felt the need to give him a helping hand, “Don’t play word games with us; do you think we’re stupid?”

Young Master Han merely snorted at his words, showing a defiant look on his face.

Silver Moon was glad that Young Master Han was so intransigent; at this rate, the situation would reach a point where words would be meaningless and a fight would break out, which was exactly what Silver Moon was hoping for. Thus, he became more fervent at inciting the crowd, “If you don’t explain this matter properly, we would not be convinced that we have spent 100 gold coins appropriately!”

The leaders who had been unable to talk with Drifting nodded their heads maliciously as they stared at Young Master Han and the gang with malevolent eyes.

Gu Fei, who had been staying quiet all this while, finally said, “I don’t know what you guys are yapping about, but haven’t I told you all already? I’m here on a ‘Bounty Mission’!”

“Oh, yeah? Who is your bounty target, then?” Silver Moon challenged. Since he was aware of Gu Fei’s identity and had been observing the latter all this while, Silver Moon figured that the matter at hand was not as simple as it seemed.

However, Silver Moon made a miscalculation. He wanted to use the misunderstanding to start a huge fight that could not be resolved by mere words. While he correctly judged that Young Master’s Elite was on the weak side when matched up against these influential leaders, he did not account for Gu Fei being bold enough to make the first move.

Gu Fei already disliked Silver Moon, and now that the latter was trying to incite everyone present into fighting, he was more than happy to start a fight on the spot. When Silver Moon gleefully inquired about his bounty target, Gu Fei simply answered, “You!” He then stepped on to a bench and leaped over the table, slashing

the sword in his hand across Silver Moon's face.

“Twin Incineration! Incinerate!” Gu Fei chanted, causing even the leaders chatting with Drifting to turn their heads over and look.

All they saw was a fiery slash enveloping a dark shadow before brushing past Silver Moon's face. This one stroke of Gu Fei was truly vicious. Although Silver Moon did not get insta-killed, a straight cut was left across his face.

Gu Fei gave it a look as he sighed, “The bottom part is a bit crooked; looks like my hand isn't steady enough. Sigh... Seems like the weight of this sword isn't very handy!”

Silver Moon was so shocked that he pointed at Gu Fei and repeatedly said, “You... You... You... You...” What he wanted to say was, “How dare you strike at me just like that!” But since Gu Fei had already executed his move, what was the point of saying that? This was what the adage ‘When a scholar meets a soldier’ meant. Silver Moon was a ‘scholar’ who was using his gift of the gab to breed discord among the people, yet his chance encounter with the ‘soldier’ Gu Fei who merely used brute strength to resolve any issue became his downfall.

Silver Moon did not get insta-killed by Gu Fei as his equipment provided him with high magic defense, but the attack was still powerful enough to drop his HP into the red. Thankfully, his two companions quickly flanked his sides. Although they reacted half a beat slower to Gu Fei, the two readily slashed at Gu Fei's face to give it a cut of their own.

“‘Bounty Mission’! Please leave if you're not involved!” Gu Fei shouted this as he retreated to dodge the two's incoming attacks.

The two men were of course not frightened off by Gu Fei's words and even positioned themselves right before Silver Moon to protect him.

Silver Moon knew that this was useless, as Gu Fei had another fearsome skill in hand. Knowing that he was no match for the deadly Gu Fei even with his two companions, he immediately bolted toward the bar entrance as he continued to provoke Gu Fei, “What are you doing?! Are you trying to silence me?!” Silver Moon was trying to incite the present leaders into aiding him.

But even though he had spoken these words quickly, Gu Fei’s words were still faster, “Translocation! Blink!”

By the time Silver Moon finished his words, Gu Fei had already teleported himself right before Silver Moon.

The blurry image of a moving sword and a fiery glow streaking through the air killed Silver Moon there and then.

“Mission accomplished!” Gu Fei exclaimed in satisfaction, as the entire bar descended into silence once more.

Chapter 204 - A Lingerin Spirit

What was called the sound of silence? Right now, that was what one could hear inside Ray's Bar. It was so quiet that anyone would hear it if a pin dropped.

...Everyone was in awe at the way Gu Fei finished off Silver Moon just now.

Twin Incineration was a spell that Mages seldom used, so most Mages had low proficiency in it. Therefore, they considered Twin Incineration as the least lethal of all the spells in their arsenal. The other job classes knew of this as well. And yet, Gu Fei had just defeated a Knight with what everyone judged as the weakest mage spell.

To be able to finish off a Knight by just casting Twin Incineration twice... This was by no means a small feat, and everyone began to think of how fearsome Gu Fei's Spell Damage was. Ironically, nobody realized that Silver Moon had high resistance against magic, and that Gu Fei could actually insta-kill any regular players by just casting his spell once. A 'Twin Incineration' spell that Gu Fei incorporated into his swordplay moves was very different from a 'Twin Incineration' spell that was cast by regular Mages, after all.

Compare to his use of Blink, these knowledgeable leaders viewed his use of Twin Incineration as more noteworthy. People merely chalked it up to a person luckily obtaining a skill scroll if anyone happened to possess Blink right now, and although getting a hold of Blink was not easy at this point of the game, Blink's lack of any offensive properties made people undervalue it.

Gu Fei's connection with Brother Assist and company, his real purpose for coming in the bar, and his disruption of the 'meet and greet' event... None of these mattered anymore, and at this moment, the leaders, especially those who had not managed to

Drifting, only wanted get close to Gu Fei to try recruiting him over, so they began gravitating toward him.

Although Drifting was renowned, none of them knew of just how powerful he was. Small and medium guilds and mercenaries would not even dream of having someone like him as a member, and only large guilds and mercenaries would think of inviting him just to have his name be associated with their organizations. Moreover, there was even a possibility of such players to turn into a 'leader' from being a 'subordinate'. As such, these leaders were keener on acquiring and nurturing a rising star like Gu Fei.

As they were thinking of this, Gu Fei who no longer had any business in Ray's Bar sprinted out of it.

"Hey, bro, wait up!" Many of them tried to chase after him, as they judged that they had a higher chance of recruiting the nameless expert than the famous individual Drifting. As for the others, they got torn between getting to know Drifting and chasing after Gu Fei for quite a while before finally resolving to pursue Gu Fei. Eventually, they all returned to the establishment in disappointment.

"Just who exactly is that guy?" everyone began to wonder.

"He is so fast. He must have added a lot of points to Agility," someone said.

"I tried to appraise his gear before, yet I failed to get a read of his robe and sword."

"His sword and robe must be top grade, and they are probably the source of his high Spell Damage," a leader accurately deduced.

"Wait a minute. With such a high Spell Damage, how come the damage of his Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno is so low?" someone posed this question.

In the blink of an eye, only a minority of the leaders in Ray's Bar continued to converse with Drifting and a majority of them

heatedly discussed the enigma that that was Gu Fei. Young Master Han used this moment to send Brother Assist a private message, “Let’s leave now!”

Brother Assist wholeheartedly agreed to this. War Without Wounds, who had been standing by the entrance, easily slipped away from the bar. As for Royal God Call, he was also able to leave the place unrestricted as no one was keeping tab on him, and he even managed to spit twice in Drifting’s general direction without anybody noticing it. But when it was Young Master Han and Brother Assist’s turn to leave, many leaders immediately took note of it.

“You two, don’t leave just yet!” someone shouted and everyone turned to look at the two.

Young Master Han smiled, “Our business here is done. Everyone, please have a nice chat with Mister Drifting!”

“Wait!” Several leaders jumped out and blocked the two’s way out.

“We still want you two to tell us more about the Mage just then!”

“We don’t know that guy,” Young Master Han maintained.

“Don’t humor us as if we are children. None of us here thinks that you guys don’t know one another.” Their discussion of Gu Fei covered every detail from his first appearance to the bar until his departure, and it was very obvious that he was familiar with Brother Assist and the others based on their interaction. Everyone was busy trying to get to know Drifting just now so they had chose to put the matter of Gu Fei aside, but now that they learned about Gu Fei’s indomitable fighting prowess, these people who now had their eyes on him would naturally not let him get away so easily.

Once more, the situation went a little out of control. Brother Assist smiled helplessly as he tried hard to explain themselves to everyone. Meanwhile, Young Master Han was silently observing

the surrounding people while standing beside Brother Assist, and he had noticed something odd: While this group of leaders was anxiously trying to find out any information about Gu Fei from Brother Assist, there were two men who did not join in. Those two were instead focusing on portraying Young Master's Elite in a bad light by reminding everyone on how sketchy the whole thing was from the start.

These two men were Silver Moon's companions, which caused Young Master Han to utter Oh no! in his mind. Could it be... that Silver Moon has purposefully goaded Miles into attacking him to expose the latter's fighting prowess and create this situation, afterward? This must be his real objective from the start! Man, that guy is truly a lingering spirit that just won't rest!

Young Master Han seemed to have a tendency to over-analyze Silver Moon's scheme, whether it was during the guild war in Yueye City, or during their recent clash in the mercenary group tournament, and this time was no exception. It was understandable, as he did not actually know Silver Moon that well. Was Silver Moon a guy who would readily sacrifice himself just to get revenge? Of course not!

But besides that, Young Master Han's judgment was spot on. Silver Moon's death was indeed what had caused the chaotic situation right now.

Over by a spawn point, Silver Moon was cursing Gu Fei and all the eighteen generations of his ancestors and descendants when he suddenly received a live feed of the situation at Ray's Bar from his two companions. Realizing that his death had indirectly exposed Gu Fei's impressive Spell Damage, he became elated and resolved to not let this opportunity slip. With all the leaders turning their attention to Gu Fei and the rest of Young Master's Elite, Silver Moon hurriedly ordered his two companions to try their best to instigate a fight, "Remember, this is not about forcing them to reveal information about Thousand Miles Drunk. The most

wonderful outcome we can hope for is for the present leaders to realize that the entire thing is nothing but an elaborate scam! Only when one side yearns to find out and another side refuses to share information can it eventually escalate into a fight, so what you guys must do is emphasize the inexplicable actions that Thousand Miles Drunk has done as well as the lies that the group has said just now!”

The two listened intently at Silver Moon’s instructions. It was precisely because they wanted to plant suspicion into the leaders’ minds about this whole matter that the two had animatedly participated in the discussion about Gu Fei before. While everyone was surrounding Young Master Han and Brother Assist to ask them about the Mage Gu Fei, the two men kept on spouting accusing words from the sidelines. Their words fueled everyone’s suspicion further until it reached the point where the leaders directly demanded for Young Master’s Elite to promptly hand over Gu Fei so that they could hold him accountable over the matter.

“What they must request is something that neither Brother Assist nor Young Master Han can fulfill. It’s the best-case scenario for us. Only such a contradiction between expectations can create an impasse between the two sides. At least, my death won’t be in vain that way,” was what Silver Moon told the two men.

“It’s a success!” one of Silver Moon’s two companions excitedly reported, “They are now demanding for Brother Assist to immediately hand over Thousand Miles Drunk to give them an account of the matter. I doubt that they can do that now.”

“Indeed, they seem to have some sort of misunderstanding among themselves. Miles must have really come to mess things up for them just then. He must have some reservations regarding this moneymaking scheme that his friends had cooked up. I don’t know what’s up with them, but it thankfully let us get to this point. Sit back and watch the show now!” Right now, Silver Moon felt that losing a level was no longer that tragic.

“Where’s that Mage? Quickly call him back! Don’t say all that nonsense about you guys not knowing him. You’re not fooling anyone here!” All the leaders were currently pointing and yelling at Brother Assist and Young Master Han.

The ‘not acquainted’ reasoning that they had given could no longer be used. This originally harmless white lie had suddenly grown teeth and came back to bite them. They had truly dug their own graves this time. As for the crowd’s demand of ‘calling the Mage back’, it was indeed something that Brother Assist and company could not do. This was entirely because Gu Fei had not replied to any of their messages.

Brother Assist no longer had any ideas left and he sweated profusely from anxiety. Young Master Han, meanwhile, seemed to not care in the least bit to quarrel with these people. Besides those few words he had said earlier when these people had blocked their way, he had actually not said another word after. His eyes flickered unevenly, and none could tell what he was thinking about.

“Are you guys calling him or not?! Don’t think we didn’t notice that that Mage is the one you guys were planning to introduce to us. It just happened that Drifting bro is here, so you beseeched an expert like him at the very last minute for help. Are you lot trying to hide that Mage of yours to find another opportunity to profit from us again?” Young Master Han’s hastily made-up plan to drag Drifting down with them was too flimsy a save. Adding the fact that the leaders had Silver Moon’s insiders inciting them from behind, many of them had now seen through this whole charade. The situation was now a step closer to what Silver Moon had hoped for with everyone treating this whole affair as a scam.

If Young Master’s Elite only ‘cheated’ one player of his or her 100 gold coins, perhaps they would just receive a few verbal curses as the player would not bother to rally a force against them for such a measly sum. But with many of them gathered together, the leaders, who really thought that they had been scammed, ended up

encouraging one another to hunt down the perpetrators.

“What do we do now?” Brother Assist saw that Young Master Han had not spoken a word, so he quickly sent him a private message.

“Don’t worry. Someone will stand up and speak for us,” Young Master Han calmly replied.

“Who?” Brother Assist asked as he swept his gaze over the crowd before them.

“These leaders are trying to learn more information about Miles with the intention of poaching him. Think about it; who would be opposed to that kind of goal?” Young Master Han asked Brother Assist.

“Oh...” Brother Assist got what he meant and his gaze shifted toward the relatively more tranquil side of the bar. Still seated over there were the four ladies of Amethyst Rebirth....

Chapter 205 - The Situation Inside and Outside

The goal of players for establishing guilds was mainly to dominate the land and their subjects, while the aim of players for creating mercenary groups was to obtain rewards by doing various types of quests and missions. Between these two types of organizations, one strove for dominance while another was just after the benefits. From this perspective, one could say that the jostling between guilds was similar to the struggle between two nations, while the competition between mercenary groups was just limited to two gaming workshops duking it out.

Whatever the case might be, talent would always be the ultimate source of strength for these organizations. But when it came down to it, guilds thirsted more for the existence of talented individuals. After all, their ultimate aim was similar to establishing a dynasty that could unify all of Jianghu.

As such, the attendees of the Insta-kill Mage's meet and greet were mainly consisted of guild leaders.

Currently, this bunch of guild leaders was glaring with arched eyebrows at Young Master Han and Brother Assist, demanding for them to call Gu Fei back. Evidently, they were looking to draw him over to their own guilds. A guild poaching another guild's member was a common occurrence in online games, but it was at the very least not done right in front of the other guild leader's face, as that would just be too high-handed and disrespectful. And even if the poaching was successful and everything was revealed afterward, a guild leader must still maintain a certain level of tact and discretion regarding his or her poaching activity to show the appropriate respect over to a fellow guild leader.

At this time, all these guild leaders were openly expressing their intentions to poach Gu Fei, not knowing that he was already

spoken for and that his guild leader was even sharing the very same space with them! Young Master Han had been quietly observing things all this while with a pair of emotionless eyes, simply waiting for the ladies to speak up.

Indeed, the ladies could no longer bear to watch these guild leaders openly poach their fellow guildmate. While July and Luo Luo calmly lowered their heads to discuss the best course of action, Lie Lie and Svelte Dancer impatiently leaped from their seats and said aloud, “You guys are too much! That Mage belongs to our guild. Are you ignoring our existence as you poach him?”

The entire bar abruptly descended into an uncomfortable silence.

These guild leaders were not Sakurazaka Moony, so they would not turn meek at the sight of a few ladies. Their sudden silence was due to the underlying meaning of the ladies’ words: they were poaching a member right before the guild leader. Poaching someone else’s member was considered as a taboo in any game, and all these guild leaders were clear of this unspoken rule for acquiring talent. Hearing that Gu Fei’s guild leader was actually in this conference, these guild leaders were momentarily at a loss on their next step. Besides that, a sudden thought flashed through their minds.

How did a small guild like Amethyst Rebirth manage to beat the large guilds of Carouse and Cloud Herder?

Furthermore, Carouse and Cloud Herder had conducted their city-wide advertisement in search of a particular Mage after their defeat at the hands of Amethyst Rebirth.

At this moment, these leaders finally knew the reason behind all those puzzling events. Amethyst Rebirth had a hidden expert in it, and Carouse and Cloud Herder became aware of his existence after clashing with the guild during the PvP tournament, so they conducted a city-wide search to find the Mage.

In short, the Insta-kill Mage was a member of Amethyst Rebirth.

All the leaders were speechless and no longer pressed Young Master Han and Brother Assist for information about the Mage. Brother Assist heaved a sigh of relief and wiped the sweat off of his forehead, yet Young Master Han, who was beside him, actually kept his eyes trained on the two claws of Silver Moon; he would love to see if they had any moves left after this unexpected resolution of the situation.

At this same moment, the two men were relaying everything that they were witnessing at Ray's Bar to Silver Moon who was currently walking down a street. When Silver Moon received this piece of news, he felt quite shocked. He knew that Gu Fei was a member of a mercenary group, but he had no idea at all that the latter was also a member of a guild. With the presence of the people from his guild, it would truly be difficult for the other leaders to pursue the matter further.

However, this also meant that the guild leaders would feel even more dissatisfied with how the matter had unfolded. There was even a possibility of them directly venting their gradually escalating frustration on to Young Master's Elite. Would that not be amazing?!

Silver Moon was happily keying in his reply when he suddenly heard someone from behind him shout, "He's over here!" He continued to compose a message even as he reflexively turned to look at the voice's origin, just in time to see an arrow fly toward him and embed itself into his forehead.

Silver Moon staggered backward from the sheer force behind the arrow. His eyes darted to where the attack had come from and saw War Without Wounds marching toward him. Royal God Call who was pulling his bowstring with a nocked arrow on it was right behind War Without Wounds.

"Brat, you're pretty ruthless!" War Without Wounds said to Royal God Call as he flourished the claymores in his hands.

Silver Moon knew that he was no match for him so he turned to flee, yet War Without Wounds was already prepared for this and activated his Charge to rush toward him.

Warriors had slow speed, but that would change whenever they were using the Charge skill. Having expected Silver Moon to turn tail and run, the veteran expert War Without Wounds had timely activated his Charge skill and flawlessly hit Silver Moon's butt cheeks with his claymores.

That thrust from the claymore propelled Silver Moon straight towards a nearby wall.

"AH!" Royal God Call yelped for Silver Moon. His face was scrunched up, and he dared not to look, but his eyes showed more glee than sympathy. By the time he finished yelping, Silver Moon had already crashed into a nearby wall.

"You did that on purpose!" Royal God Call exclaimed as he approached War Without Wounds.

Silver Moon was crumpled up against the wall. He felt light-headed, and it was not due him being inflicted with the Dizzy effect of Charge but due to him bodily slamming into a wall. He shook his head to clear his thoughts when the ground before him darkened as the large frame of War Without Wounds blocked off the sun's warm glow.

"What are you guys doing?!" Silver Moon asked.

"F*cker. You were messing things up in the background and you dared to ask what we are doing?!" War Without Wounds replied with a question.

"Rough him up!" Royal God Call merrily cried out.

"Yeah!" War Without Wounds agreed, as he stooped over and lifted Silver Moon up. With a slap of his arm, Silver Moon found himself slamming against the wall again. Although the damage dealt to him was insignificant, the damage the blow had inflicted

on his soul could not be expressed by mere numbers.

The two were not done yet. Royal God Call took this chance to let loose an arrow, landing it right on to Silver Moon's chest. Silver Moon did not die from that, though, and merely slid down the wall. Royal God Call regretfully commented, "What a pity; it would be great if I could pin you against the wall!"

"Ah! Should we tie him up and hang him up the clock tower?" War Without Wounds suggested.

"That's a great idea!" Royal God Call was all for it.

"Shall we go, then?" War Without Wounds asked as he picked Silver Moon up.

"Yes, let's go!" Royal God Call excitedly answered as he took his time to savor Silver Moon's miserable expression.

Silver Moon gritted his teeth, not making a sound.

"Hey, you rascal. Are you looking for people to save you from the clock tower? Ha ha ha! Actually, we were lying about that!" War Without Wounds' arm whirled when he said that, and Silver Moon slammed into the wall for the third time.

"That's right! Why would we waste our time and effort on you?! Oi, are you already dead?" Seeing that Silver Moon was not moving, Royal God Call prodded him with an arrow.

Suddenly, the prone Silver Moon did a forward slash at him. But since he did not possess Gu Fei's speed, his surprise attack was not particularly fast. Although Royal God Call was able to dodge his point-blank strike, the suddenness of the attack made him break out in cold sweat.

"How despicable! Let's finish him off now," Royal God Call took two steps backward and said this to War Without Wounds.

War Without Wounds nodded his head, "We really should rush things a little." With that, he stepped forward and brought his two

claymores down on Silver Moon. Silver Moon lifted his King's Blade to block it, but War Without Wounds changed his downward cleave into a horizontal cut from both sides, "This is the beauty of dual-wielding."

Silver Moon felt helpless regarding his situation. A wall was blocking his path of retreat, and with attacks coming from his left and right, he was only able to block one side and was forced to take the other slash of War Without Wounds.

"Man, this guy's really tenacious! He's still not dead even after all that!" Royal God Call exclaimed as he nocked an arrow to give War Without Wounds a helping hand.

Given his non-combat job class, Silver Moon was not able to respond properly to the two's concerted attacks. Moreover, any form of resistance from him was easily stifled by the two experts. Silver Moon wanted to raise his stats using King's Command, but Royal God Call and War Without Wounds' overwhelming attacks prevented him from even granting any Knight's blessing on himself. In the end, he unwillingly succumbed to death.

Royal God Call looked at the time and glanced over to War Without Wounds, "Do you think Sword Demon will feel impatient waiting over by his side?"

"Best to tell him," War Without Wounds then sent Sword Demon a message.

"Think he can do it by himself?" Royal God Call asked.

"There shan't be a problem with his Stealth. Not everyone is like Miles who can detect a Thief on Stealth, you know?" War Without Wounds replied.

"G*dd*mm*t, Miles has yet to remove his message restriction," Royal God Call cursed.

"Silver Moon's pretty lucky. If Miles knew about us hunting him, he would surely be dropped by Miles all the way down to level 30,"

War Without Wounds sighed.

“Do you know how things are at Ray’s Bar?” Royal God Call asked.

“No idea. Young Master Han said he doesn’t need our help, so I guess everything is fine,” War Without Wounds replied.

“How wonderful would it be if those leaders killed off Young Master!” Royal God Call yearned.

War Without Wounds nodded his head, “I hope Brother Assist doesn’t die. He has all the coins, so he better not die and drop them!”

“Hmm, should we go take a look?” Royal God Call suggested.

“Let’s!” The big and small figures of the two headed back to Ray’s Bar, only leaving behind the signs of their pulverization of Silver Moon as well as the dumbfounded onlookers.

Over by Ray’s Bar, Silver Moon’s two companions had yet to receive a reply after sending out their reports, so they could only wrack their brains for any possible solutions. Since Silver Moon was the brain of their team, the two could not quickly come up with any ideas. While Silver Moon was aware that the presence of Gu Fei’s guildmates only made it easier for them to create conflict between the leaders and Young Master’s Elite, the two did not analyze this matter deeply enough and were unable to come to the same conclusion that he did. The two, for their part, thought that the presence of the Amethyst Rebirth ladies was preventing them from developing the situation to their desired result. Thinking that it would be best if they were not there, one of the two men cried out, “Since that’s the case, can you ladies just leave? Don’t hinder us in our business.” They did not say this without a basis. With the small size of Amethyst Rebirth, the two judged that the guild would be unable to do anything even if the many guild leaders tried to poach their member openly.

Hearing the man's words, Young Master Han burst into a suppressed laughter and turned to Brother Assist, "These guys are f*ck*ng morons. Are they trying to court death?"

Following this, Svelte Dancer indignantly bellowed, "WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?!" Shen then activated Fleetfoot, darted toward the man who had spoken, extended her dagger in hand in one swift motion, and finished off the rascal.

Chapter 206 - Does it ever end

After insta-killing the man with one stroke, Svelte Dancer retreated to her original position. Her ghostly attack wowed all the leaders in the establishment as they had never seen something like it before.

What was more; Svelte Dancer's one attack was clearly not backed by a skill but was merely her inherent Attack Power. This left the leaders tongue-tied and made them question themselves. Had they been the recipient of Svelte Dancer's attack, would they have been able to dodge it? And if they could not, would they be able to withstand that one blow? Each of their faces paled when they thought up to that, and they all came to one conclusion: Too fast! There's no way anyone could dodge that.

When she was back into her original position, Svelte Dancer asked aloud, "Spouting nonsense. Do you lot even know the rules?!" She then carefully wiped her dagger clean as her eyes swept through the crowd of guild leaders, as if she was looking for her next target.

The remaining man of Silver Moon at Ray's Bar did not even dare to make a peep. However, just because he had stopped speaking did not mean that others would let him do so. Young Master Han had an expression of taking joy in calamity and delight in disaster as he pointed the man out, "That friend over there, didn't you have something to say?"

"Nope! None at all!" the man quickly denied.

"Really? You were so talkative moments ago!" Young Master Han continued to say.

The last man looked at Svelte Dancer quickly. Feeling her eyes on him, he nearly peed his pants as he mumbled, "I really have nothing else to say." This was what a guilty person would say; otherwise, a person would not be so nervous.

It was the man's fearful expression that further deepened the shadows in the leaders' hearts and they no longer dared to speak arbitrarily. Young Master Han did his best to stifle his laughter. Just as he was preparing to say something that would give the leaders an out for today's matter, the bar's door was suddenly pushed open from the outside and a man walked in.

"Eh? Why are you lot still here?" the person exclaimed while looking at the congregation.

Young Master Han looked at the newcomer and almost coughed up blood. Miles! Gu Fei had the worst possible timing to return to the bar. If this dragged on and on, when would the matter ever end?

"What are you doing here?!" Young Master Han's face was black from barely suppressed ire.

"'Bounty Mission' It's for real this time, though!" Gu Fei answered.

"Oh..." all the leaders happily exhaled as realization dawned on them. Had Gu Fei not said that, none of them would have recognized him. After all, Gu Fei's face was covered the last time he had been in the bar. Without it, none of them associated him to the Mage from before. Mages wearing black robes were a dime a dozen in Yunduan City, and in fact, the newest attire available for level 40 Dark Priests was colored black. Moreover, differentiating between Mages and Priests was difficult without scrutiny. Would anyone use Appraisal on every random person who entered a tavern just to determine his or her job class?

Once Gu Fei uttered 'Bounty Mission', everyone immediately knew who he was. They were even more certain of his identity when he took out Moonlit Nightfalls from his dimensional pocket. With Guild Leader July calmly staring at them, all the guild leaders could do nothing but blush at Gu Fei's sudden reappearance.

It was Gu Fei who took the initiative by slowly walking toward

them. Unlike his earlier arrogant demeanor, he was currently giving off an apologetic vibe as he courteously said to the leaders, “Please let me through; I’m on a ‘Bounty Mission’.”

The few leaders awakened from their daydream and quickly stepped aside. One of the more quick-witted leaders even helpfully asked, “Who are you looking for? Want me to help you?”

The person’s question held a lot of weight behind it. After all, many of the people currently inside the bar were influential individuals by their own right. For two leaders to clash with each other, it would very likely escalate into a guild war. Thus, it could be seen how much importance the person had placed to attracting the talent Gu Fei. To compete for Gu Fei’s attention, he did hesitate to start an altercation with others.

If an altercation did start because of him, Gu Fei would surely be compelled to lend a helping hand, and it was clear which side he would aid at that time. Once Gu Fei was forced to choose a side, whatever happened afterward would just create many chances for the guild to entice him in. While this scheme might seem moronic, it was actually a very sophisticated psychological attack.

It was just a pity that this person had no understanding of where Gu Fei’s interest lay. He was doing ‘Bounty Mission’ to have a valid reason to slay people, so why would Gu Fei let others take his target? After rejecting the offer, Gu Fei immediately pointed to someone in the crowd with his sword and said, “It’s you! The rest of you, please make way!”

Scrambling to make a good impression to Gu Fei, all the leaders hurriedly moved to either side for him in a way that resembled the parting of the Red Sea.

Gu Fei’s target was a distinguished guild leader, yet the person was currently not feeling very distinguished. Gu Fei had singled him out and was now rushing to him. No matter how much he wanted to ingratiate himself to Gu Fei, there was simply no way he

would willingly expose his neck to the latter for him to chop off. Right now, the guild leader could not stomach Gu Fei's self-assured attitude.

At the end of the day, you're just a Mage. Guess I'll just have to see how OP you are! was what the person thought to himself. With a wave of his hand, he brought out his claymore. The man was a Warrior. Applying the basic logic of online games for this fight, the two's proximity to each other was clearly fatal to the Mage, a job class that was at a disadvantage in melee, and the limited space the tavern provided was also helpful to a Warrior, making it that much easier for him to force this melee.

Unfortunately for the Warrior, Gu Fei was an existence that defied logic. Ye Xiaowu was so hung up over Gu Fei precisely because the latter was a walking anomaly in-game. If Gu Fei had chosen to be a Warrior, Fighter, or any melee job class and proceeded to use his kung fu, Ye Xiaowu would not have paid much attention to him. But since Gu Fei had a Mage job class, his use of kung fu in close combat had changed the way his job class would normally be in-game. This was why Ye Xiaowu had regarded Gu Fei as an existence that could break the balance of Parallel World.

The Warrior knew that the damage of Gu Fei's Twin Incineration was high. With Gu Fei closing in on him, the Warrior deduced that he was planning to cast that spell and decided to take the initiative in attacking Gu Fei. No matter how high a Mage's Spell Damage was, his or her defense would always be low. It would be hard for the Mage to cast his spell if he took the offensive, right?

The deduction of this leader was rather clever. When Gu Fei stepped within two meters of him, the leader quickly ducked his head and activated Charge.

"Ah!" someone among the crowd of spectators exclaimed, subconsciously worrying for Gu Fei's safety. At the same time, the other leaders sighed as they assumed that the Mage had limited experience regarding clashes like this since he did not take

precaution against the Warrior's Charge.

“EHHH?!” In the next moment, however, everyone exclaimed in disbelief.

Seeing the Warrior lower his head, Gu Fei easily figured out his next move and foresaw various possible scenarios for it. What happened after was exactly as he had expected.

Gu Fei sidestepped to dodge the attack and the charging Warrior brushed past him. With a quick incantation, Gu Fei cleaved his sword down the Warrior's back. Who knew how many times he had crossed weapons with Warriors and experienced Charge before? He truly felt sorry for these players. Engaging in a PvP in such a formulaic manner, all the Warriors' fighting techniques seemed to have been cut from the same cloth.

Naturally, that resulted into Gu Fei employing the same PvP maneuver to subdue them again and again. He only had to sidestep to dodge their attack and follow it up with Hui Feng Luo Yan. Since this move always worked perfectly in every instance, Gu Fei felt very lonely! He was like Dugu Qiubai! How he wished to encounter a Warrior that could avoid this technique of his, but he sadly had yet to encounter such a Warrior.

At this moment, the Warrior's back went ablaze as he continued to Charge ahead. It was extremely eye-catching to the others around him due to the fact that Twin Incineration would apply to its victim the Burn effect for a few seconds. As the Warrior finally finished his forward Charge, the flames on his back continued to dance merrily without any signs of extinguishing.

Gu Fei rarely saw such a scene as 80% of his targets would promptly disappear after receiving his slash powered by Twin Incineration; none could survive the Burn effect of his spell as well.

You're a guild leader alright! You're quite tough! Gu Fei commended the Warrior internally. Closing in on the Warrior

with two steps, he was about to plunge his sword onward when the Warrior was swathed in a white light and disappeared.

“Sword qi?!” someone exclaimed.

“Sword your f*cking qi! It’s the Burn effect of Twin Incineration!” someone immediately ridiculed.

Gu Fei disappointingly kept his sword. He totally did not expect the Warrior to survive the initial blow of his Twin Incineration, only to be done in by the spell’s Burn effect. “Mission accomplished!” Gu Fei announced. He was about to activate the teleportation function of his Windchaser’s Emblem when he noticed Young Master Han throwing him a look.

“Just say what you wanna say; stop giving me eye signal. I’m not Sword Demon, so I don’t understand it,” Gu Fei said.

“F*ck*ng remove your message restriction, then!” Young Master Han exclaimed, enraged.

“Oh... I completely forgot,” Gu Fei quickly readjusted the message setting of his gaming account and immediately received Young Master Han’s message, “Kill that guy.”

Gu Fei looked to where Young Master Han was pointing his hand and spotted a certain man in the crowd. “Why?” Gu Fei asked him.

“To protect the peace,” Young Master Han curtly answered.

Gu Fei looked over at the man who was presumably undermining the peace. When their eyes met, the man’s eyes immediately darted away as nerves overcame him, the very act of someone feeling guilty. At the same time, Gu Fei recognized him as one of the two men that Silver Moon had brought in the conference and promptly added two and two together.

To indiscriminately kill a man in front of so many people, the repercussions would surely not be good. Gu Fei pondered on how to do the deed without angering the others and then activated Blink to appear right before the man. The person squeaked in

surprise and retreated a few steps from Gu Fei, causing him to step on to something. By the time the person lowered his head to look, Gu Fei had already coldly remarked, “Bro, you’ve stepped on my foot.”

It was unknown when Gu Fei had placed his foot right in the man’s path of retreat, but it was obvious that he had intentionally done it so that the latter would step on his foot.

The man was about to explain himself, but Gu Fei did not give him a chance to do so. Pulling out his sword, he slew the man right there and then.

Chapter 207 - PvP in a VR Setting

Killing off a man just because his foot had been stepped on; such a farfetched yet tyrannical reason was not very convincing to others. The quick-witted players at Ray's Bar could naturally tell that Gu Fei was just looking for a reason to eliminate the man.

Furthermore, Gu Fei's current execution of his moves was far more vicious than his execution of them before. With his attack connecting to the target better and Silver Moon's lackey being weaker than the guild leader moments ago, Gu Fei managed to finish the man off with that one strike powered by Twin Incineration.

"How domineering!" all the leaders exclaimed in unison. Still, they could not fathom Gu Fei's reason for slaying the man. Was he intending to kill everyone here? Suspecting Gu Fei, they kept their distance from him and took their weapons from their dimensional pockets to respond in kind if the need arose.

However, Gu Fei merely stowed away his sword after slaying the man, waved his hand toward Young Master Han, bade the Amethyst Rebirth ladies goodbye, and even flashed Drifting a smile, showing everyone good etiquette.

"Hey, hold up!" Svelte Dancer moved to stop Gu Fei from leaving, but she was too late as he had already disappeared in a flash of white light.

"Ah! Did he fly off?" Everyone looked up the ceiling in confusion, sharing a sense of loss with one another after.

Young Master Han took pity on them and decided to offer them a piece of information, "Distinguished guests, that rascal's name is Thousand Miles Drunk. I wish you all the best at befriending him!"

All the leaders felt that such a conclusion to this matter was already enough. Svelte Dancer's piercing glare made them

uncomfortable to ask further about the Mage, so they just opted to leave the premise and do their individual sleuthing after. Those leaders who were chatting with Drifting also suggested finding a more private place to continue their conversation. Being able to converse with Parallel World's number one Mage Drifting, personally witnessing the Insta-kill Mage's fighting prowess, and managing to acquire the Insta-kill Mage's IGN... These leaders deemed their trip here today as very worthwhile. Truly, their 100 gold coins had been spent well.

All these leaders had come to Ray's Bar in a hurry for the 'meet and greet', and now that they were leaving, they did it quite reluctantly. Eventually, the only ones who were still in the bar were the few inquisitive patrons who had stayed to watch the whole affair, the Amethyst Rebirth ladies who were staring with hostility at two individuals, and the said two individuals were Young Master Han and Brother Assist. With the crowd of leaders gone, the two men left the corner that they were boxed in moments ago and randomly found a table to occupy.

"Oi!" Svelte Dancer discourteously came up to them, "Why did you tell them his name?"

"Heh... Are you afraid of them poaching Miles?" Young Master Han asked as he glanced at her.

"Of course! Miles is a member of our guild," Svelte Dancer seriously answered.

"Relax. All they know is his IGN; how are they gonna poach him with just that?" Young Master Han asked.

"Why would they not be able to? This is an online game, Mister. Names are like phone numbers; wouldn't he be harassed to death at this rate?" Svelte Dancer replied with a question.

"Everyone in Parallel World knows your name, so how come you're not being harassed to death?" Young Master Han asked.

“Oh!” Svelte Dancer finally got it as she mumbled, “Miles has also set his account in a way that random people can’t add him as a friend, right?”

The question caused Young Master Han’s confident smile to turn rigid. Gu Fei might be an exceptional player, but he was not as prominent as the players ranked high on the leaderboards, so there would be no need for him to set a restriction to his ‘friend request’ setting. Since Young Master Han and the ilk had the habit of doing just that, he somehow assumed that Gu Fei would also do the same. With that thought in his mind, Young Master Han hurriedly sent Gu Fei a message, “Have you set your account in a way that random players can’t add you as a friend?”

“I did! I did!” Gu Fei replied, “Why is everyone asking me this?” It seemed that Svelte Dancer had also asked him the same question.

Young Master Han sighed in relief, not knowing if he should laugh or cry at the moment. This charade today might not have caused any fight, yet it still had been fraught with danger at every corner until the very end. “My brain has worked overtime on this,” Young Master Han muttered to himself, gesturing at Ray for two bottles of liquor.

Wonder how things are going for those guys who are still busy at work... Young Master Han thought to himself. He then sent Sword Demon, Royal God Call, and War Without Wounds a message each. The plan to hunt down Silver Moon was naturally something he had ordered them to do.

“I’m looking for an opportunity to strike,” Sword Demon quickly replied. He already had his Frost Memories in hand and was just waiting for a chance to strike his target. He had been tailing Silver Moon since the latter left the spawn point. He was not like Svelte Dancer or Gu Fei that possessed high Attack Power. In fact, he might even lose in terms of Attack Power to the well-equipped Thieves out there.

Frost Memories might have superb additional traits, yet the dagger was already considered as a low-tier weapon by the current standards of the game. But despite Frost Memories' Attack Power being lower than the available level 40 daggers' Attack Power out there, Sword Demon continued to use the dagger as his main weapon due to his reluctance to part with its wonderful traits. Fortunately, Sword Demon had made quite a small fortune during the game's official release, which had allowed him to purchase some equipment that boosted his Strength as well as Attack Power. With all those pieces of equipment on him, Sword Demon's Attack Power was at least not too far off from the acceptable standard, although he was definitely no longer top-notch in terms of damage output.

He had no means to take down Silver Moon instantly like how Gu Fei could, so he refrained from making a move when Silver Moon left the spawn point, as he was worried that the latter would be able to slink back into the safe zone if he failed to finish him off in a timely fashion.

Silver Moon was also someone who had been part of countless fights in online games, so he was already on guard for any possible ambush after reviving at the spawn point. Once he left the safety of the spawn point, Silver Moon readied himself to rush back into the spawn point if things went south.

Sword Demon had chosen to tail him for two reasons. First, he was waiting for Silver Moon to let his guard down. Second, he was waiting for Silver Moon to get far from the spawn point. This was to prevent the latter from escaping him by entering a safe zone.

Sword Demon calmly made this judgment and did once underestimate Silver Moon, despite knowing that the latter had already dropped by two levels. At the same time, he was confident of his ability, so he did even plan for what he should do if he happened to lose to Silver Moon.

Silver Moon had experienced being hunted back in Yueye City, so

his counter-tracking awareness was very sharp and he maintained a careful pace even after leaving the safe zone. After walking for quite a distance, he suddenly turned around and yelled out, "Come out! I've already discovered you."

Sword Demon was stunned. He did not expect that Silver Moon would have the ability to detect someone in Stealth like Gu Fei. He readied himself to enter combat. Usually, a Thief would launch their attack once he or she got discovered by the enemy. Sword Demon, for his part, slightly shifted his body, and this small movement allowed him to see through Silver Moon's scheme.

Despite changing his position, Silver Moon's eyes still stared at where Sword Demon was originally at.

If he were any other Thief, he might be unable to discover the other's trickery in time. However, the memory of Gu Fei seeing through his Stealth was already deeply carved into his bones, so he was very sensitive to this sort of thing. The unusual rigidness in Silver Moon's action clued him in on the fact that the man was merely testing the waters.

Sword Demon stopped what he was doing. He then silently watched Silver Moon glare at thin air for several seconds before turning around and continuing his way. Sword Demon followed.

Silver Moon seemed to have gotten addicted to performing the 'I have already discovered you' act as he did it twice more after. Each time, he would affix a self-assured expression on his face. Sword Demon yawned and continued to watch Silver Moon perform each bluff, all the while calculating how far they were from the spawn point. He would sigh deeply after every calculation, as they were still quite near the safe zone, which meant that Sword Demon would have to trail Silver Moon longer, and that was a nauseating thought.

Fortunately, Silver Moon eventually got convinced that he was relatively safe from any ambushers after performing the act thrice

and settled to periodically checking his surroundings for any players who would suddenly jump out to attack him. Sword Demon could not help but be impressed by his dedication to take precaution against an ambush. Silver Moon hailed from another in-game city, so it was hardly believable that he would be familiar with Yunduan City.

Silver Moon eventually chose to walk on a deserted alleyway where he could spot anyone entering it whichever direction the person took. Just as he thought that he was safe from any ambushers, a sudden pain blossomed from his waist and a portion of his HP was gone in an instant. Sword Demon had finally struck.

Silver Moon's expression turned to shock. He did expect that a Thief would patiently stalk him like this. He was carrying King's Blade in his hand along the way, so he quickly slashed it to his attacker as he turned around. However, his assailant was much faster than him, and before his sword could even chop down, his waist already got skewered for the second time.

Silver Moon bellowed. He put all his strength into his slash to vent his pent-up frustration, hoping to cleave the person in two. His one slash cut nothing but air, however. And when Silver Moon completed his turn, he found no one in sight.

"Who's there?!" Silver Moon exclaimed. He could barely believe his eyes. The Stealth state should have ended once the Thief had executed his attack, yet he was unable to find this unknown assailant now that he had turned around. Could this be the rumored Vanish skill? Blink... Vanish... Possessing those skills that would only be available at a later stage of the game, were all the players advancing so quickly now?

In his state of surprise, he felt another stab puncture the back of his waist once more. Silver Moon was even more horrified now. His assailant actually did not possess Vanish but was just fast enough to get behind him in the time it took for Silver Moon to turn around. That was right. This opponent was indeed quick on

his feet, as he managed to quickly position himself at Silver Moon's rear once more.

Silver Moon's shocked exclamations and panicked expression were a surprise to Sword Demon. He had always considered Silver Moon as an expert fighter, yet now that he was actually fighting him, Sword Demon could see that the latter's PvP capabilities were nothing remarkable. He quickly understood why with a deep sigh. Silver Moon was ultimately a Knight, and his job class provided him limited exposure to fights like this.

He might have accumulated a lot of experiences in other MMOs, but he was now inside a game with a VR setting. The full-immersion technology of Parallel World had forced all the players to readjust their past gaming knowledge and adapt to the new environment this game provided, essentially requiring everyone to start from scratch. Gu Fei's prowess lay in his twenty-year worth of experience being in actual fights in reality. As for Sword Demon, his assiduity for studying online games was a match for Gu Fei's passion toward kung fu. Just based on his fighting moves right now, it could be said that he already had a thorough understanding of the Thief job class – as expected of a first-rate gamer in the online gaming community.

Although Silver Moon tried to fight back, he was ultimately unable to defend against Sword Demon's assault. In no time at all, Silver Moon was sent wailing all the way back to his spawn point without even catching a glimpse of his assailant's face.

Sword Demon yawned, sheathed his dagger, and left quietly. In his eyes, this was not a PvP worth mentioning as his opponent was simply too weak.

Chapter 208 - Curtain Call

Over by Ray's Bar, most of the people had already left. The Amethyst Rebirth ladies also said their goodbyes and took their leave. With their departure, Young Master Han and Brother Assist dove straight into that room that they were always occupying. War Without Wounds and Royal God Call rushed over in no time. Seeing that the bar was nearly empty, they quickly figured out what had happened and also hurriedly made their way to their usual room.

Inside, Brother Assist was currently counting all the gold coins they had earned from this business venture as Young Master Han looked on. War Without Wounds and Royal God Call originally intended to ask about the situation with Silver Moon, but the thought quickly fled their minds upon seeing the dazzling pile of gold coins on the table. The two asked instead, "How much?"

Brother Assist just finished emptying the last coin pouch. Lifting his head to look at the two, Brother Assist steadied himself first before he carefully announced, "18400 gold coins!"

"WOW!" War Without Wounds and Royal God Call almost fainted from happiness.

"We collected 3000 gold coins more than what we had initially expected. Although some guilds out there did not come despite our invitation, even more people whom we had not invited turned up." Brother Assist picked up two coin pouches and weighed them in his hand. Before the four men was not a small mountain of gold coins but a pile of coin pouches stacked up high.

"18400 gold coins... Each of us gets 4580 gold coins! AHHHHH!" Royal God Call danced excitedly. Players could strut on the streets if they had several hundreds of gold coins in their pouches, while those with several thousands of gold coins could nonchalantly order two glasses of liquor in the taverns in one go – one to drink

and one to pour to waste.

“We can’t split that much; we have to give some to Drifting,” Brother Assist corrected.

“That’s true. I’ll pass it to him, then!” Royal God Call nobly volunteered.

No one bothered with him.

“How much are we giving Drifting?” Brother Assist asked Young Master Han.

“You gotta at least give me 4000 gold coins, yeah?” someone answered. The four followed the voice’s origin and saw Drifting standing by the entrance of their room. Drifting stared fixedly at the mountain of coin pouches, but his expression was a lot calmer than Royal God Call and War Without Wounds.

“Who are you? Get out!” Royal God Call went over to drive him out.

Drifting reached out, ruffled Royal God Call’s hair, and he pulled him to the side.

“I wanna have a deathmatch with you!” Royal God Call declared, fuming.

Two more heads poked out from behind Drifting. It was Left Hand of Love and Right Hand of Cool.

“Duel means one versus one. You better not play foul!” Royal God Call quickly added.

No one bothered with him.

Left Hand of Love and Right Hand of Cool retracted their heads as Drifting entered the room and casually occupied a seat, “I’m the one who has done the most work today, so I deserve to take 4000 gold coins!”

He was not necessarily lying. When Drifting became the man of the hour due to Gu Fei’s disruption, he had to ‘entertain’ all those

leaders and fend off all their queries as best as he could. As for Young Master Han and Brother Assist, all they had to deal with was the mental roller-coaster that the situation had created. They came close to problems but always managed to extricate themselves from it. The point was that it was not a particularly tiresome task, so it was definitely not as difficult as what Drifting had to go through.

“Didn’t we already agree on 3000 gold coins before?” Young Master Han began to negotiate with Drifting.

“When did we settle on that?” Drifting shot back.

“You opened with 3000, and I accepted that!” Young Master Han raised his three fingers.

“Didn’t you show me two fingers to represent 2000 gold coins, to which I said we would discuss the matter later?” Drifting refuted his claim.

Young Master Han shook his head and lifted his two fingers, “You’re mistaken. This doesn’t mean 2000 gold coins. This means ‘Oh, yeah. I accept!’”

Drifting was flabbergasted.

“Stop nagging! Since you’ve already settled the price, just take your money and leave!” Royal God Call quickly lifted three pouches of 1000 gold coins and tossed them over to Drifting.

“Forget it. 3000 gold coins it is!” Drifting waved his hand, showing his generosity. He then took the three pouches and stood up, “I’ll take my leave now.” With that, he left.

Royal God Call stuck himself next to the doorway and watched Drifting leave the bar before turning around and laughing uproariously.

“What’s so funny?” the three asked, nonplussed.

“That d*mb*ss!” Royal God Call replied between breaths, “Out of

the three coin pouches I gave him, one only has 400 gold coins in it.”

The three exchanged glances.

“It’s time for us to split the money!” Royal God Call did some quick maths, “There are 16000 thousand gold coins here, so we can just take 4000 gold coins each.”

War Without Wounds was about to say something when Young Master Han waved his hand to interrupt, “Let’s split the money evenly! Let’s not worry about the minor details, or this will never end.”

War Without Wounds was intending to mention the extra compensation he was promised at the start, but he decided to just forget about it when he heard Young Master Han’s words. This whole matter had plenty of twists and turns, and it was truly not possible to quickly make a proper account of everything, so they might as well split everything evenly and be done with the matter completely.

As the four grabbed four coin pouches each, the curtain of the room rustled once more. The four of them looked up and Brother Assist was the first to speak, “Hey, Sword Demon!”

Sword Demon nodded in greeting, entered the room, and took a seat.

The four were still holding on to their coin pouches, and for some unknown reason, the sight of Sword Demon made them feel somewhat ashamed. War Without Wounds pushed one of the coin pouches in front of him over to Sword Demon, “Want one?”

Sword Demon smilingly shook his head.

“You’re done with Silver Moon?” Royal God Call changed the subject, asking the question he and War Without Wounds had originally wanted to inquire about.

Sword Demon nodded his head.

“Do we need to inform Miles?” Royal God Call looked at Young Master Han with an expression that showed his glee in reveling in someone else’s misery. No Smile was one such target that Gu Fei had set his eyes on, and Royal God Call would love to see Silver Moon experience the same thing as No Smile’s.

“No need,” Young Master Han replied.

“Ending this only after three kills? That’s not like you!” Royal God Call said. Although Young Master Han was a Priest, he lacked compassion for others. He’s so indifferent that he would even sacrifice them if the need arose, treating enemies and friends alike as cold as the winter’s frost.

“I mean we don’t have to act on it ourselves anymore,” Young Master Han clarified.

“Who’s gonna do it, then?” Royal God Call asked, puzzled.

Young Master Han gave a slight smile, “Who else do you think would? When everyone left, Dusky Cloud also brought his men out in a rush, not even bothering to bid us goodbye.”

“Oh!” The rest of them finally remembered that episode.

“Such deep hatred!” Royal God Call marveled, “It’s been so long, yet Dusky Cloud still has such strong desire for revenge.”

“Didn’t they recognize each other in the bar from the start?” Brother Assist wondered.

“Dusky Cloud was the first to arrive, so he sat by the front. Silver Moon was one of the last few to enter, so he sat behind. If Silver Moon didn’t have so many things to say, Dusky Cloud would not even notice him in that crowd. By the way things have turned out, it’s likely that Dusky Cloud has already set his eyes on him, yet Silver Moon is still unaware of it,” Young Master Han explained.

“What goes around really comes around!” everyone sighed repeatedly.

“Let’s just sit and wait for some news!” Young Master Han was quite self-possessed as he took up a comfortable pose, “Ray, bring me two bottles of your most expensive liquor.”

Brother Assist and the others immediately stood up to leave the room when they heard this. Everyone would all suffer a huge loss if Young Master Han decided to split the bill without warning. Besides Young Master Han, the rest of them were unwilling to chip in money for this.

The rest ran out of the bar as if they had the devil at their heels, leaving Sword Demon alone with Young Master Han.

“Want a glass?” Young Master Han asked Sword Demon.

Sword Demon shook his head.

“How about a pouch, then?” Young Master Han offered a coin pouch to Sword Demon.

Sword Demon shook his head still.

Young Master Han could only lift his glass and toast to himself, “This ‘meet and greet’ ended quite successfully. Cheers.” With that, he downed the glass in one go.

“Successfully?” Sword Demon asked.

Young Master Han chuckled, “I have the money, all the guild leaders are pretty much satisfied, and Miles doesn’t seem to be holding a grudge; what more could I ask for?”

“What?” Sword Demon was not in the ‘meet and greet’, so he knew nothing of what had transpired during it.

Young Master Han narrated the situation as succinctly as he could, and Sword Demon listened to him wordlessly, only asking at the end, “Miles seems to have come prepared, so who told him?”

Young Master Han shrugged his shoulders, “You should ask him that yourself.”

“Brother Assist has announced it on the forums. Maybe, Miles

read it there,” Sword Demon hypothesized.

“Does that guy even know how to visit the forums?” Young Master Han snorted derisively.

“That’s hard to say for sure,” Sword Demon replied.

“Then, it’s just a coincidence,” Young Master Han stated simply.

It was indeed purely coincidental. Gu Fei had ‘coincidentally’ visited the game forums that particular day. However, this was not something unprecedented. Gu Fei would always visit the forums every five levels to search for a grinding map with humanoid monsters that he could use his kung fu on. It just so happened that he rose to level 40 that day, so he visited the forums to begin his research after getting offline.

Brother Assist’s posts originally did not enter Gu Fei’s notice, but because the matter of an Insta-kill Mage was riveting to many, his posts made it all the way to the top of the forums. Given his familiarity with Brother Assist, Gu Fei casually read through one of his posts out of sheer curiosity, only to discover that the latter had continued with his plan to use Gu Fei in his moneymaking scheme.

Gu Fei felt very helpless. He did not wish to be treated like a product that could be sold, but he also did not wish to quarrel with his friends over it. In the end, Gu Fei decided to approach it as something to entertain himself.

Covering his face and using a weak spell... Gu Fei wanted to see how his fellow mercenaries would react when everyone barraged them with questions. Who knew that Drifting’s presence in the conference would give Young Master Han a chance to redirect the people’s attention away from him? After that, Silver Moon’s dastardly behavior infuriated Gu Fei to the point of having to reveal his real fighting ability.

Whatever the case might be, this ‘meet and greet’ was finally settled and the curtain was called. And for the entire Young

Master's Elite, the timely 'savior' Drifting, and most of the attendees, the event's conclusion was more or less satisfactory.

The only one who ended up feeling miserable about everything was Silver Moon. His misery was not about to end any time soon, however, as the street he was walking on to rendezvous with his brothers had been blocked by Dusky Cloud and his companions.

"Boss Silver Moon, it's been a while!" Dusky Cloud cheerfully called out to him. This trip to Yunduan City had really been worthwhile for Dusky Cloud and his buddies.

Chapter 209 - Exceptional Luck

Silver Moon sputtered when he recognized Dusky Cloud, “I did not think I would see you here in Yunduan City.”

Dusky Cloud flashed him a cold smile, “There are many things that you did not think of.”

Dusky Cloud was currently in a three-man team, whereas Silver Moon was just by himself. A lone Knight who had just lost three levels would definitely be no match for three opponents, but Silver Moon did not even get flustered and simply said, “How untimely it is to be here today!”

Dusky Cloud chortled, “Of course. To you, anytime I’m near is untimely.”

Silver Moon shook his head, “You’re mistaken.”

“I’m mistaken?” Dusky Cloud faked a shocked expression, “Does Boss Silver Moon welcome my presence here, then?”

Silver Moon smiled, “When you put it that way, I do welcome your presence right now.”

Just as Dusky Cloud was feeling baffled by Silver Moon’s words, he saw Silver Moon place two fingers into his mouth and blew through them, creating a high-pitched sound. In an instant, the unassuming players that had set up their stalls along the street as well as the pedestrians that were rushing about to do their businesses or were walking at a leisure pace as they chatted with their companions all turned their attention to Dusky Cloud and his two friends.

Dusky Cloud and his companions had experienced lots of PvP scenarios in Yueye City, so they quickly realized that they had walked into a trap. Did this guy already discover our presence in the bar and only pretended otherwise to set up this trap for us?

Dusky Cloud was regretting his rash action right now. He had

clashed with Silver Moon many times in the past, so he had a pretty good grasp of his personality, yet the successful eradication of Past Deeds as well as his comfortable days leading the people in Yueye City had made him so full of himself that he had ended up underestimating his opponent. In his eyes, Silver Moon was no longer a strong competitor but was just a lousy mongrel that had abandoned his 'wife' and fellow brothers to flee from the city, forgetting the fact that a lousy mongrel was still a dog in the end and would logically retain its nature. Silver Moon was still a devious person as ever.

The delighted expression on Dusky Cloud's face moments ago was now on Silver Moon's face. The anguish Silver Moon had felt from dropping three levels earlier was somehow cured by the miserable expression on Dusky Cloud's face.

Admiring his handiwork for half a minute, Silver Moon derisively said, "When I said that your arrival is untimely, I was actually thinking from your perspective!"

"Think for your granddad!" Dusky Cloud venomously spat as he brought his mates to charge at Silver Moon.

Silver Moon also had a good grasp of Dusky Cloud's personality and already predicted that the latter would take an aggressive stance in such a situation. Retreating backward, Silver Moon activated his sword's King's Command skill to buff the stats of his surging brothers toward the three men.

Silver Moon did not have many men and most of them were cumbersome Warriors. Dusky Cloud and his mates were seasoned fighters, so they knew that sacrificing one or two of them might buy time for one person to survive this ambush, but their 'one for all, all for one' mentality made them choose to fight this PvP together. Dusky Cloud did not waste time defending himself against the attacks of the surrounding players and merely hurtled himself toward Silver Moon and stabbed him.

Silver Moon had high defense, so that one stab was not fatal to him, but it was still powerful enough to cause him to break out in cold sweat. His men then descended a flurry of blades on Dusky Cloud and turned the latter into a beam of white light, snapping Silver Moon back into his senses, That b*st*rd has gotten a lot stronger since our last fight! His equipment is pretty OP as well!

Silver Moon spat on the ground, “The ones who should be here didn’t show up, yet the ones who shouldn’t be here unintentionally served themselves up to me.”

Silver Moon finally had a bit of good luck here in this night filled with bad lucks. After being roughed up by Royal God Call and War Without Wounds and being assassinated by the unknown Thief, Silver Moon surmised that his enemies were planning to hunt him down, so he set up this trap with him as the bait to draw the enemies out and take his revenge, but Dusky Cloud was the one that showed up instead.

“Sh*t! Did that guy actually travel all the way from Yueye City to Yunduan City just to hunt me down?” Silver Moon mumbled to himself. A month had passed since he had last been in Yueye City. The hatred and grudges between players in online games usually would not last this long, but Silver Moon’s case was special. Firstly, both sides had spent a long time fighting and killing one another in Yueye City, so the resentment they had for one another were bone deep. Secondly, Silver Moon had fled from the city just as the guild war victors Dusky Cloud and crew were starting to enjoy themselves hunting and killing the Past Deeds members, so their desire to eliminate Silver Moon only strengthened over time. Thirdly, Dusky Cloud no longer viewed Silver Moon as a rival and thought that eliminating the latter would now be a simple task. In the end, this one skirmish had sent Dusky Cloud and company all the way back to Yueye City to revive as they had yet to log off and record their character data in any of Yunduan City’s spawn points before.

However, Silver Moon did not know of this. He had not noticed Dusky Cloud and company at Ray's Bar, as he had been focusing all his attention on Young Master's Elite. At this moment, he was thinking that Dusky Cloud might bring his five-hundred-man reinforcement to eliminate his thirty-or forty-man group.

Silver Moon had just arrived in Yunduan City a couple of days ago, so the development of the mercenary group he had just established was average at best. Moreover, no matter how capable Silver Moon was, competing for talent with the long-standing mercenary groups in this city was just impossible, so he simply had no way of hastening the recovery of his former might. Dusky Cloud only had to send a hundred men over and the small fire Silver Moon had managed to start up here in Yunduan City would be stomped out of existence once more. Thinking up to this, Silver Moon no longer dared to loiter in this street.

Silver Moon let his men disperse on their own, and after inquiring for some information, he made his way to a spawn point and logged off with a restless heart.

With that, the trap that had originally been set up for Young Master's Elite was abandoned by Silver Moon after Dusky Cloud's unexpected disruption. It could be said that Young Master's Elite was exceptionally lucky today.

On Gu Fei's end, he had teleported himself into the Bounty Assignment Hall after killing his target and Silver Moon's remaining lackey at Ray's Bar. He was choosing a new mission to PvP for a bit as he erased his PK value. Around this time, he would usually be participating in the guild versus guild tournament, but due to Amethyst Rebirth's elimination, he could only make do with doing 'Bounty Mission' at present. Participating in the tournament is truly much more fun, Gu Fei forlornly thought to himself once more.

Currently, 'Bounty Mission' could no longer satisfy Gu Fei's appetite. Since leveling up increased in difficulty the higher the

player's level became, more and more people started cherishing their lives. As a corollary, the city had gotten a lot more peaceful. At present, 80% to 90% of Gu Fei's 'Bounty Mission' targets were new players under level 30. They were so weak that Gu Fei could not feel even the slightest bit of enjoyment slaying them. It had been a while since he had chanced upon a worthy 'reward' like that guild leader at Ray's Bar after that morning with Brave Surge.

To others, rewards were something they would receive upon completing quests, missions, and such. Gu Fei, for his part, treated his 'Bounty Mission' target as the 'reward' itself. The higher the level or the stronger the foe, the more Gu Fei valued the reward. It was rare for Gu Fei to have a suggestion toward the improvement of the game, but he really wished that the Wanted Players list would not just list the serial numbers and PK value of the targets and would show the fugitives' levels as well!

Despite this being the case, Gu Fei was still hoping to strike the lottery. Just as he exited the hall after submitting his 'Bounty Mission' result and getting a new one, he happened to bump into Drifting.

"You're doing missions, huh. How diligent," Drifting remarked. When he had just arrived in Yunduan City, he had thought that doing 'Bounty Mission' was a popular activity in it. Only later did he find out that Gu Fei alone had such a unique hobby.

"Is there something you need me for?" Gu Fei asked, realizing that Drifting had been waiting for him. As Drifting nodded his head in confirmation, Gu Fei pressed on, "What is it about?"

"I just wanna know how you have unleashed that weak spell at Ray's Bar... I'm certain that Miles bro's Spell Damage is not that low. Plus, your sword's erratic movement should've made it impossible to cast that spell despite you properly chanting its incantation!" It seemed that Drifting's dedication to learning the ins and outs of online games was as strong as Sword Demon's. There were many things that had happened at Ray's Bar involving

him, yet his question to Gu Fei was only about his unusual casting of that spell back then. Clearly, he was in the middle of studying the spell system of Parallel World. Drifting might have seemed as if he was very into his conversation with all those guild leaders back then, but he had actually been pondering over this question all that while. Therefore, if he did not get an answer from the horse's mouth right now, he would be unable to sleep peacefully tonight.

“What do you think?” Gu Fei asked, smiling.

“Did Miles bro perhaps get a friend to help him with that spell? You were chanting it, but the spell was actually unleashed by someone else?” Drifting thought that this was already the most logical explanation for the matter.

Gu Fei smiled as he shook his head.

“How did you cast it, then?”

“It seems that my method is pretty effective as even an expert Mage like you couldn't see through it! Watch!” Gu Fei pulled up his sleeve and wriggled his fingers on his left hand, as if he was about to perform a magic trick. As Drifting intently watched his movement, Gu Fei's right hand fished out Moonlit Nightfalls and whirled it madly in the air, “Twin Incineration! Incinerate!”

“Twin Incineration is an instant-cast spell, there's no way—” Drifting thought that Gu Fei was trying to fool him, so he unhappily uttered this, only to stop short of completing his statement.

Gu Fei's sword was not the only one aglow; his left hand was ablaze as well. In the next moment, Gu Fei's left hand lashed out to chop, creating the afterglow of Twin Incineration.

“Did you get all that?” Gu Fei asked, smiling ever so slightly.

Drifting already wore the expression of someone who had had an epiphany, “You set your dominant hand as the left, and used it to unleash your spell. That's why the mad waving of your right hand

did not affect your spell-casting and why the weapon's Spell Damage did not factor in either, resulting into your Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno having a weak Spell Damage.”

“You’re an expert alright,” Gu Fei commended.

“If I were an expert, I would guess it right away,” Drifting shook his head in sadness. “Thanks, Miles bro. Looks like I won’t have a sleepless night, after all! Continue on with your missions, I’ll take my leave now.”

The two bade each other farewell and went their separate ways, with Gu Fei sprinting off to the coordinates of his ‘Bounty Mission’ target.

Chapter 210 - 100% Appraisal

Gu Fei did 'Bounty Mission' so often that he now only had to glance once at the coordinates to determine the direction he should head to. In fact, as long as it was within Yunduan City's borders, Gu Fei could tell which street his target was walking on from just seeing the coordinates. After observing the changes in the coordinates, Gu Fei could even determine where the target would head next.

Oh, no! Gu Fei shouted to himself when he saw the changes in the coordinates of his freshly acquired 'Bounty Mission' target and quickened his pace.

His target was currently moving toward the direction of the Archer Range. There were usually two reasons why players would head to the spawn points: one was to learn skills and second was to log off. The latter being the reason for going to a spawn point was more common than the former. A target logging off was fatal to someone doing 'Bounty Mission'.

Gu Fei was quite far from the Archer Range, so he sprinted all the way to it and even activated his Blink whenever possible. All the while, he was praying hard for his target's purpose in the Archer Range to be a different sort.

Unfortunately for Gu Fei, luck did not always go with the wishes of man. As Gu Fei fervently wished that his target was not heading to the Archer Range to log off, the man headed there to do exactly that. Just as he had the Archer Range in sight, the Windchaser's Emblem suddenly stopped working. Gu Fei promptly pulled up his mission log and saw that the target's serial number was darkened, a state showing that the person was offline.

Gu Fei heaved a long sigh. He was not afraid of the man logging off; instead, Gu Fei was saddened because he could no longer pick up another 'Bounty Mission' for today. Being able to pick up only

one bounty target at a time... This was yet another area that Gu Fei thought the system for the 'Bounty Mission' needed improvement.

Gu Fei reckoned that this would be yet another 'failed' mission. It was not as if he had not experienced such an outcome before. Missions that he picked up at night where the targets logged off before he could reach them meant that the targets would likely clear off their PK value the next morning before he could get online. Whenever those happened, the missions would be labeled as 'failed'.

This was how the previous streak, which awarded him the Windchaser's Boots for completing one hundred consecutive 'Bounty Mission', was finally broken. There was a possibility that completing two hundred, three hundred, or even five hundred consecutive 'Bounty Mission' would award him other items, but Gu Fei's one hundred seventy-sixth 'Bounty Mission' sadly met with failure. Currently, Gu Fei only had to complete twenty-four more 'Bounty Mission' without failing once and he would be able to attain two hundred consecutive 'Bounty Mission'.

Completing Bounty Mission consecutively is really difficult, Gu Fei sighed to himself. However, the completion count of 'Bounty Mission' would not be affected by this 'failure'. Gu Fei was currently on his one hundred ninety-ninth mission, so two more completed missions would allow him to hit two hundred. He got the Windchaser's Emblem when he completed one hundred 'Bounty Mission', so completing two hundred 'Bounty Mission' might also award him with something. It was a pity that his consecutive completion record was finally broken. This stop here meant he would have to start all over again, which really made him feel quite vexed.

Gu Fei disappointingly paced about at the Archer Range, thinking that his target might have only logged off to use the toilet and would be back right away. In the end, Gu Fei's mission log remained unlit.

Gu Fei was so upset that he did not feel like grinding his levels anymore and just went offline as well.

The next day, Gu Fei tried to log on as early as he could in hopes of possibly completing the mission. Alas, the quest was already tagged as 'failed' when he logged on. But seeing that he was only two missions off from attaining the two hundred completed 'Bounty Mission', he was eager to see what sort of reward he would get for it, so Gu Fei swiftly went to obtain another 'Bounty Mission' and proceeded to slay his target. Once the second mission was completed, he immediately returned to the Bounty Assignment Hall to turn in his mission's result. Just as he had expected, the system sounded. However, it did not send a mission reward and instead informed Gu Fei: [Your Windchaser's Emblem has been upgraded.]

Gu Fei quickly took out his Windchaser's Emblem and had a look.

Windchaser's Emblem was a trinket that had two traits attached to it. The first trait decreased the coordinates' refresh rate down to a minute when doing 'Bounty Mission', while the second trait allowed him to teleport himself into the Bounty Assignment Hall upon completion of a mission. Now, listed below the two traits was a third trait: 100% Appraisal of 'Bounty Mission' target.

This feature meant that when doing 'Bounty Mission', Gu Fei could completely ignore the level as well as the Appraisal skill's rank of his target and appraise the person fully. This '100% Appraisal' trait was very useful to the average players, as it would allow them to gauge the targets' Strength and see if they were up to par or formulate an idea on how to fight the targets. As for Gu Fei, this feature did have some use. Although he did not often appraise his target when PvPing, it was only because his Appraisal skill's rank was too low, receiving only a whole bunch of question marks whenever he used it.

This sort of skill required a player to spend time doing quests to raise its rank, but where would he find the time and effort to do

that? As such, he could only use it as often as he could when he had nothing better to do and slowly raise its rank. Therefore, the difference in rank between him and the average player slowly widened, giving him more and more question marks every time he used Appraisal. Gu Fei's Appraisal skill seemed to only exist in name, but with the upgrade of his Windchaser's Emblem, Gu Fei could at least fully appraise his 'Bounty Mission' targets.

Gu Fei hurriedly grabbed a fresh 'Bounty Mission' to test the new trait out. It had been a long time since a PvP maniac with high PK value appeared on the Wanted Players list. This was not something unique to just Yunduan City, either. On the overall Wanted Players list, it could be seen that the mentality of the players regarding this matter progressed at the same pace.

Leaving the Bounty Assignment Hall, Gu Fei sprinted toward his target's location, which was the central plaza's Tavern. Gu Fei loved such targets, as they would indefinitely remain in their positions inside taverns, so the chances of failing the missions were almost zero. Such targets would certainly be together with their friends, so they could trigger Gu Fei's favorite hidden mode in 'Bounty Mission': exchanging blows with the target's friends.

Gu Fei made a beeline to the Tavern and swiftly entered the premise. He immediately spotted his target with serial number 19857 hovering above the person's head. Gu Fei did not hurry to engage the target and instead chose to use the '100% Appraisal' trait of his Windchaser's Emblem.

As expected, the trait provided him complete data of his target from head to toe. Gu Fei felt quite disappointed when he saw that his target was just a level 34 Mage with common-grade equipment. Sighing deeply, he walked over to the target's table and knocked on its surface, "Bounty Mission'."

The table occupants did not react strongly to his declaration and merely curiously raised their heads, showing a surprised expression on their faces when they saw Gu Fei.

Gu Fei, for his part, found the table occupants that were about Royal God Call's age to be quite familiar. Before he could put a finger on where he had seen them, someone on the table blurted out, "Teacher Gu Fei!"

With this shout, all the table occupants stood up in their panic and embarrassment.

"Ah!" Gu Fei exclaimed as he realized that they were all students of Yulin Middle School where he was a teacher.

Those who went to school knew that the normal subject teachers would rarely recognize a whole class of students. This was especially true for the physical education teachers that handled more classes and had limited interaction with every student.

Most P.E. teachers would only be able to recognize those students who were more exceptional physically. As for Gu Fei, he would definitely pay special attention to students who knew a bit of kung fu, but he would treat them equally otherwise, which basically meant that he knew only a handful of students.

The table occupants were students that Gu Fei would always see during class, so he could somewhat recall them. But if anyone requested for him to name them all, he would not be able to do so.

In contrast, students would always know their teachers. After restraining themselves for a short while, several of them blatantly said, "Turns out Teacher Gu Fei is also playing this game!"

Gu Fei was only a P.E. teacher, which was very different from the usual subject teachers that these students would see every day, so they were not particularly nervous in front of him. Furthermore, Teacher Gu Fei was the butt of jokes in school. If the one standing before them were a class teacher, they would long disappear upon recognizing the person. These students were therefore acting really carefree in front of him, while Gu Fei felt somewhat uncomfortable with this situation.

“Teacher Gu Fei, what did you say when you knocked on the table?” a student asked.

“It’s nothing. I’m just passing by,” Gu Fei fibbed, “You guys play on; I’m leaving first.”

“Eh! Teacher Gu Fei, don’t be in such a hurry to leave! Let’s play together!” a student boldly called out.

His voice was loud, so it naturally attracted eyes on them. “Teacher?” “Student?” all the nearby players began to asked these questions to one another as they glanced over to their direction.

Gu Fei was born into a family of kung fu practitioners, so the prevailing rule in the family was to honor the teachers and respect their teachings. Although his teacher-student relationship was rather different from that of his family’s, he still considered it as improper to play games with his students. Seeing that they now had the attention of everyone in the Tavern, he hurriedly bade these students goodbye and swiftly left the premise. Ever since Gu Fei started playing Parallel World, this was the first time he had panicked the most, and it was mainly due to the psychological distress the meeting brought him.

He sprinted out of the door and used Blink whenever possible. The students were all around level 30, so they soon lost sight of Gu Fei despite trying their best to chase after him.

“Woah! Teacher Gu Fei ran so fast. He must be a pro!” a student exclaimed as he stared intently at where Gu Fei had disappeared to.

“Teacher Gu Fei seems to be a Mage, so how could he run so fast?” another student asked.

“Did anyone managed to appraise him? What’s the result?” someone questioned.

“I can’t appraise anything; Teacher Gu Fei’s level is way higher than ours!”

“Wow...” Everyone was in awe.

“What huge news! Teacher Gu Fei actually plays Parallel World, and he’s actually in our city to boot!” someone excitedly commented.

“Ha ha! Let’s get Teacher Gu Fei to join our guild!”

“That’s right! That’s right! Let’s go look for Ah Fa.”

“Ahhh! We forgot to ask Teacher Gu Fei’s IGN. How are we gonna find him?”

“You’re so dumb! We can ask him during class!”

“Ohhh! TRUE!”

Chapter 211 - Significant Improvements

Gu Fei ran through many streets first before looking backward and sighing in relief when he did not spot any of his students chasing after him. He saw that he was not far from Ray's Bar, so he decided to just head over there.

Inside Ray's Bar, some members of Young Master's Elite had gathered earlier than usual to boast to one another about their equipment acquisition through yesterday's earnings.

Exceptional gaming skill and first-rate equipment were two things that players must have to become peerless experts in online games, and those who only had either of these could only call themselves as prospective experts. The goal of these players currently occupying the room was to become the so-called one-in-a-million experts, but although they had managed to adapt their exceptional gaming skills to Parallel World's full-immersion environment, they had been quite stumped on how to acquire first-rate equipment.

Acquiring first-rate equipment through farming was not really ideal as it was entirely dependent on luck. Meaning, there was no guarantee that what the player needed would actually drop. Although a portion of the players claimed that the possibility of looting good equipment was what made farming attractive, some of them were simply saying that to justify the effort that they had put into farming for equipment, while others were people who could not afford to buy equipment to begin with and could only stick to grinding for it. They were the sort of people who complained about sour grapes when they saw others having the means to acquire them.

These few gaming experts knew that the only sure way to acquire first-rate gear was to purchase them, but despite the market already having those pieces of equipment that they coveted, these experts just did not have the money to purchase them, so they

could only content themselves with checking the items every day to see if they had already been bought by others. Thanks to yesterday's business venture, they finally saw their accounts hold several thousands of gold coins at once, which made them become pickier on choosing equipment. In the end, they had to practically spend the whole of last night browsing through the online gaming catalogues for the best pieces of equipment for their job classes and buying them.

“Look at my armor! Isn't it a beauty?” War Without Wounds' burly figure had on a full-body armor that gleamed in obsidian black and he happily displayed it to the others present by turning around in front of them.

While the armor was indeed very exquisite, War Without Wounds' bulky frame was just not meant to look beautiful. And since the equipment in the game would fit its user's body, War Without Wounds' armor only gave off a sense of oppressiveness that completely lacked beauty.

“This armor has high defense and additional traits that provides Defense Enhancement, it adds 15 points to Strength, 15 points to Endurance, and increase my Rage generation by 20%! Not bad, yeah?” War Without Wounds gave them a brief overview of his armor's traits as he turned around once more.

Everyone felt a wave of nausea come over to them. Royal God Call could not take his vomit-inducing display any longer and said, “Scram over to one side! Take a look at my bow and ring, instead!”

Royal God Call's former bow was originally high grade and was beyond his level, but since it was only white tier, it no longer had any advantages at the current stage of the game. After going on a shopping spree last night, he finally found what he deemed as an excellent bow.

Sniper's Scream. It had high Attack Power and additional traits that increased an Archer's attack range by 10 meters, adding 20%

to Agility, and increased chances of Fatal Blow by 15% while increasing the Fatal Blow effect by 15% as well. Moreover, it provided Enhancement to the Snipe skill.

Royal God Call's new bow was purple tier, while War Without Wounds' armor was only gold tier, so the former's purchase easily eclipsed War Without Wounds' armor by tier alone. Just as he was about to present his ring, War Without Wounds hurriedly dropped his sword on the table, "Look at my sword; it's purple tier, too!"

"Look at my ring!"

"Look at my sword!"

As the middle-aged man and the youngster argued on, Young Master Han placed something on the table, "Look at what I got for myself!"

Everyone glanced at it. What Young Master Han had placed on the table was a bottle of the most expensive liquor in Parallel World, which was worth 120 gold coins.

Although the liquor's price was nothing compared to that of expensive equipment, but it carried a different meaning altogether. Since equipment was a necessity in a game, anyone would try to buy one as long as he or she had the capital for it. Liquor, meanwhile, was considered as a luxury item. No matter how rich a player was, the person would usually just settle to drinking inexpensive liquor and would only partake a bit of the most expensive liquor during special occasions or at someone's treat. Seldom would there be anyone who would spend 120 gold coins on a bottle of liquor. Young Master Han looked at the two mockingly after showing how much more of a spendthrift he was and said, "You guys are not at my level yet!"

"Tsk! Wastrel!" Feeling dissatisfied, the two scoffed at him.

"Brother Assist, what did you get for yourself?" Young Master Han addressed Brother Assist.

“I’m still looking!” Brother Assist replied.

“Oh...” Royal God Call quickly interjected, “Then, let’s look at my ring! See, this ring—”

“Hide your stuff; Miles is here,” Young Master Han interrupted.

Royal God Call and War Without Wounds quickly put the items on the table into their dimensional pockets and straightened themselves up. As Gu Fei walked in, they all smiled at him amiably. Although yesterday’s affair was over, they only saw Gu Fei again today, so they were clueless on how he felt about the matter.

Young Master Han felt that it was best for them to not talk about their purchases last night in front of Gu Fei until they ascertained his view regarding yesterday’s event. Seeing the others flaunting their newly bought equipment, Young Master Han immediately told Ray to alert him of Gu Fei’s arrival.

However, the Gu Fei before them was different from the usual and wore an anxious expression on his face. Just what or who had given this man, who slew people without batting an eyelid, such a fright?

“Pour me a drink,” Gu Fei motioned for Young Master Han to pour in liquor on the glass he had picked up by the counter outside.

“What’s this?” Young Master Han poured Gu Fei’s glass liquor as he curiously examined him, “Just what has made you so upset? Go on; don’t feel shy to share it with us.”

Everyone became quiet. Young Master Han was really the king of ‘tact’; it was no wonder so many people wanted to bash him up.

Gu Fei did not seem to mind it, though, as he replied after drinking a mouthful of liquor, “It’s nothing. I just met someone I know in reality.”

“Are they babes?” War Without Wounds and Royal God Call leaned in. For these two, the highest level of achievement in online

gaming was bringing a girl from the internet to real life and turning fantasy into reality. From the bushes of Yunjiao Lakeside to a private hotel room....

Gu Fei cast the two a sidelong glance, which caused them to feel sheepish, “Can’t we just casually ask that?!”

“Parallel World is very large. If you’re not intentionally looking for them, it’s actually not easy to meet a familiar face,” Brother Assist commented.

“It’s just meeting someone you know in reality; why be so flustered?” Royal God Call asked.

“Is it because the person asked money from you or wanted you to carry him or her? That’s pretty annoying,” War Without Wounds remarked.

Gu Fei exhaled deeply as he really did not know where to begin. Moreover, this was something his fellow mercenaries would be unable to help him with. He could only hope that he would never meet the students again to avoid that sort of awkwardness in the future.

“What group are we matched up with for tonight?” Gu Fei changed the subject.

“High Cloud mercenary group. It’s a level 4 mercenary group. Besides leader Cirrus and his few friends, the other group members are players who were not chosen for their own guilds’ mercenary groups. Although their levels are quite high, they terribly lack unity. Cirrus is not that impressive himself. They managed to reach this stage of the mercenary PvP tournament by fighting every match separately and depending on their numerical superiority,” Brother Assist briefed.

Young Master Han would usually relay their tactic for the match at hand after every meeting’s briefing; today, he merely continued drinking liquor after Brother Assist was done speaking.

Brother Assist nudged him, “Hey, it’s your turn.”

“Sword Demon is not here yet; I don’t wanna repeat myself twice,” Young Master Han replied.

“Oh. It’s still early!” Brother Assist realized as he looked at the time.

They rarely spent time chatting with one another idly, so the atmosphere became rather awkward when everyone realized this fact.

“Why don’t we all grind levels together?” Gu Fei suggested in an attempt to break the ice.

“F*ck off! We’re not gonna grind with you!” Royal God Call and War Without Wounds answered in unison. While they knew that grinding levels with Gu Fei would be efficient, everyone wanted to enjoy themselves playing the game, so they did not want to become mere observers from the sidelines as Gu Fei fought with the monsters. Moreover, seeing Gu Fei fight really hurt their pride as experts! They were already feeling pain from being with him in all their fights, so they had no wish to rub salt to their wounds by grinding levels with him.

With that, the awkwardness pervading the air dispersed by itself and they all began to casually converse with one another until Sword Demon arrived. Seeing that everyone was already in the room, Sword Demon received quite the shock. He was usually the most punctual out of the six of them, so he never expected for his fellow mercenaries to arrive earlier than him today. It was as if he was watching the sun rise from the west, and he trembled as he took a seat. Is something huge going to happen today?! Sword Demon wondered internally.

“Ahem!” Young Master Han cleared his throat and began to speak, “Today’s opposing group is as Brother Assist said. It has plenty of members, but the men lack unity. Plus, their group leader isn’t as amazing as I am. But it’s precisely because of all

these factors that we may find them troublesome to deal with. Even if their leader is wary of our Grand Kiting strategy, it doesn't guarantee that his members will listen to him and not participate in the match, so let's assume that all eighty members of High Cloud will be present!"

"But!" Young Master Han quickly added, "Because they are not united, they will probably be fighting this match separately and without a commander. As such, this match is where all of you must fully demonstrate your abilities and break them one by one."

"From your words, it seems like all your planning from before is for naught?" Gu Fei asked.

Young Master Han sighed deeply, "Man proposes, but God disposes; how was I supposed to know that we would face such enemies? Could it be that the heavens are jealous of my talent and have intentionally intervened to make me suffer a bit?"

Everyone was simply speechless at how he had managed to twist his failed plan into something worthy of praising him for.

Chapter 212 - The Most United Guild and the Most Divided Mercenary Group

“How many more rounds are there in the mercenary PvP tournament?” Gu Fei suddenly asked. Recently, he no longer found doing ‘Bounty Mission’ as satisfying. The participants of the PvP tournament had far better skills compared to his ‘Bounty Mission’ targets, and the further they went in the PvP tournament, the stronger the opponents were. Gu Fei sincerely wished that Parallel World’s event would never end, so that he could keep on fighting even stronger opponents.

Sadly, Brother Assist’s answer immediately killed off his wish, “Yunduan City is now in the final 16!”

“Final 16? That means there are only four matches left!” Gu Fei exclaimed rather dejectedly.

“Speaking of which, why is it ‘16’? Why not 15, 17, or any other odd number?” Royal God Call asked.

Brother Assist smiled, “In the first four to five rounds, there were indeed guilds and mercenary groups that got a bye. This is how the system made its adjustment when faced with odd numbers, plotting out the final journey by relying upon the sequence of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and the doubling at each stage. The situation that you mentioned has long been accounted for by the system.”

“There are still four more rounds!” Everyone had varying thoughts regarding this. While Gu Fei was feeling depressed that he would no longer have a chance to PvP after this, the rest were feeling sad that they had yet to display their prowess in this tournament thus far. Gu Fei’s fighting ability had caused large guilds to search for him all over the city. Although it was seen as a huge joke by many, countless experts actually hoped to achieve that feat. Gu Fei already took the first step ahead, while they... They still needed to work hard.

“We’ll let them see our greatness today!” Several of them cried out at the same time, especially Royal God Call and War Without Wounds who were brimming with confidence due to their acquisition of top-grade equipment.

Just as Young Master’s Elite made preparations for today’s match, those students of Gu Fei went to see their guild leader, Ah Fa. Ah Fa happened to be the student who had brought Gu Fei into Parallel World by giving the latter the Mage account.

“Ah Fa! Ah Fa!” Several students called out when they spotted him on the street.

“Argh! How many times do I have to tell you guys not to call me by my real name in-game? Call me by my IGN, instead!” Ah Fa was a game enthusiast whose lifelong dream was to create a legendary IGN, such as Sword Demon, Royal God Call, and the rest of Young Master’s Elite, that would leave people breathless when they heard of it.

One of the students chuckled, “Wouldn’t your name still be called Ah Fa¹ if we call you by your IGN?”

“Don’t shorten it however you like! Call me Fatal Reckoning!” Ah Fa replied solemnly.

“That’s a mouthful. Can’t we just call you Ah Fa?” someone suggested.

“Fine. Ah Fa it is...” Fatal Reckoning helplessly accepted his fate to be called as Ah Fa. “Why are you guys looking for me, anyway? Are people bullying you again?” Ah Fa asked upfront. They were all classmates in reality. While Ah Fa was just a nondescript student in school, he was actually the big boss in the game. This was mainly due to him acquiring a Parallel World account during the game’s open beta days.

After the game was official released, the new players were able to choose which in-game city to spawn at, so all his fellow classmates

naturally flocked over to Yunduan City since Ah Fa was in there. Therefore, it was truly inevitable for Gu Fei to encounter his students in Parallel World given their proximity to him.

“Nobody bullied us. In fact, we even ganked² a guy who was stealing our monsters!” someone happily answered. This was the student Gu Fei was supposed to be sending to prison, serial number 19857.

“Then, what’s the matter?” Ah Fa asked.

“Can you guess who we just met?” another student excitedly asked Ah Fa.

“Is it Oathless Sword? While he’s the guild leader of Yunduan City’s largest guild, you guys shouldn’t feel so excited just by meeting him,” Ah Fa replied.

“Nope! It’s Teacher Gu Fei!” the person excitedly declared. He was afraid that Ah Fa would not recall who was Gu Fei, so he said the teacher’s full name.

Ah Fa immediately laughed once he heard this, “And I thought this was some huge matter! It’s not news to me that Teacher Gu is playing Parallel World, as I’m the one who gave him his gaming account!”

“What?! Why didn’t you tell us about it before?!” They were all dumbfounded.

“Teacher doesn’t want me to tell others about this! But I suppose it is okay now since you guys have bumped into him,” Ah Fa replied.

“Then, why didn’t you drag teacher into our guild?” the students pressed on.

“That... Teacher belongs to a guild already!” Ah Fa reasoned.

“What is his guild’s name?” they all asked.

Ah Fa could not answer that. He hemmed and hawed for a long

time, causing all the students to laugh in unison, “Ha ha ha! We thought you were close to Teacher Gu Fei. Turns out you know nothing at all!”

Ah Fa’s silence only proved this point. He had originally wanted to use this opportunity to get close to Gu Fei by playing the game together, but he did not even manage to add him as a friend after that first day because he chose to run off with that scrupulous gaming employee back then.

Although he knew of Gu Fei’s IGN, he could not add the latter no matter how many times he tried as the latter had put restriction to his ‘friend request’ setting. Afterward, he tried getting close to Gu Fei during class, but he actually got admonished by the latter in front of everyone. From then on, Ah Fa and Gu Fei pretty much kept to their own and did not meet each other again despite being in the same city.

After the game’s official release, Ah Fa expended a lot of effort and resources to set up a guild called Ultimate Class 3 and brought his classmates, who had come to play Parallel World, into it.

But despite being the guild leader of Ultimate Class 3, the class monitor in class was still called by that title in the game by his classmates, while he was still called Ah Fa by everyone. It was only until he had helped his fellow classmates by ganking several other newbies and defeating the bosses that they had no means to fight in their quests that they saw him differently, which caused him to become even busier.

“Ah Fa, I can’t kill this monster; quickly come and help me!”

“Ah Fa, I’m lost; come and find me!”

“Ah Fa, I need 5 gold coins; send some to me by the Second Peddlers’ Street!”

“Ah Fa, I got killed by someone; come avenge me!”

Ah Fa may have spent his days running around at everyone’s

beck and call, but he had actually enjoyed being valued like this. After all, they were all classmates from the same classroom who spent most of their time attending classes together! Ah Fa dreamed of having a bunch of brothers following him as he played the game at night, he could hardly believe how this dream of his had actually become reality!

That was how he had ended up becoming a guild leader that was more like a nanny to his classmates. Still, he was quite happy with being needed by everyone that he even forgot about his original intention to become friendlier with Teacher Gu Fei. It was evident he had no clue how to answer these questions about Gu Fei that his classmates were now asking!

“Let’s get teacher to join our guild!” a student said.

“Let’s tell this news to everyone first!” another student said as he fired off this information on the guild channel. Ultimate Class 3 Guild had twenty-one members. The number was little since the members were all students of Yulin Middle School’s Year 2 - Class 3. Although the level of their guild could not compare to Amethyst Rebirth, they were much better than any other guilds in terms of unity and cohesion. They were all friends in reality, after all. Only students like them would be able to gather together from so many different places like this.

As for Gu Fei, he was currently facing a group that was the exact opposite of the students’ united guild.

Just as what Brother Assist had reported and Young Master Han had deduced, High Cloud was completely divided. This was first demonstrated by how all eighty members of the mercenary group were present for this match. Until now, not one mercenary group or guild would be able to make all its members be present for a match. But because all the members of the mercenary group were fighting for their own enjoyment and goals, not one of them would miss a single match of the tournament. This was not because they cared for their group’s welfare but because they wanted to gain

more for themselves. Their similar way of thinking formed a different sort of unity that was a great irony in itself.

At the start of the match, Young Master Han, as usual, climbed up a hill to get a good view of the PvP arena's terrain.

Atop the small hill that could be called the vantage point for this entire map, six men stood against the brisk wind as their gazes swept over the field below and noted that the opposing mercenary group's eighty members had already spread all over the map in search of their enemies.

"Oh. So they're not totally disorganized, after all. They still have some modicum of unity," Young Master Han used a newly emptied bottle of liquor to point at a certain location in the map.

Indeed, High Cloud mercenary group was not wholly divided as its players formed up over ten different smaller teams depending on which guilds they had originated from. These unevenly divided teams then scattered about across the map in search of the enemies.

"Let's see which group will find us first!" Royal God Call wiped his newly bought Sniper's Whistle in anticipation. As this would be his first ever shot using the bow, Royal God Call wanted it to be a beautiful memory.

"Aren't we being too arrogant by just standing here? Won't all eighty of them make their way over here once they spot us?" Brother Assist asked.

"They're gonna take turns. Just watch!" War Without Wounds extended his hand and pointed.

Sword Demon nodded his head, "Looks like those guys will be the first one." He was talking about a team of five men that was fast approaching them.

"Prepare yourselves, everyone. These players are looking to fight separately, so they will be coming at us one after another. If

everything goes well, we can kill them off one by one and achieve victory,” Young Master Han said.

“Don’t worry!” Gu Fei already had his sword out.

In the blink of an eye, the five enemies had already made their way to the foot of the hill. Royal God Call was in no hurry to shoot them, so he cheekily waved at the five men in greeting. Who knew that these five men would just look at the six of them and then head toward another direction?

“What just happened?” The six men exchanged glances.

“It... seems like they thought that we are one of their own!” Gu Fei replied.

“Man, this mercenary group’s lack of unity is scary!” everyone sighed.

Chapter 213 - Charge!

The six men of Young Master's Elite received quite the scare upon seeing the mess that High Cloud was.

It was not possible for all seven hundred fifty members of a level 5 guild like Traversing Four Seas to know each other, but since there was an item like an emblem that could not be faked to prove a member's belongingness into a guild, whenever there was a group PvP, no one would mistakenly kill or be killed as long as he or she was wearing the said item.

Mercenary groups, for their part, did not have emblems to prove the identity of their members. Perhaps, this was because the current size of mercenary groups had yet to reach the level in which the members would have to prove their identities. The highest level mercenary group right now was at level 5 with just one hundred members, after all. While recognizing all seven hundred fifty players of a guild was impossible, familiarizing with the faces of one hundred individuals was not. This was why there had never been cases in the mercenary PvP tournament where players would mistake their comrades for the enemies and vice versa... until now, that was.

It was a wonder how High Cloud mercenary group had managed make it into the Final 16 with some of its members not being able to differentiate between their fellow mercenaries and enemies. But while the enemies mistook the members of Young Master's Elite for their comrades, the six men did not mistake the enemies for what they were. It must have been a surprise for these people for Royal God Call to wave at them friendlily. And yet, Royal God Call's wave was not really done to act friendly with the enemies but was due to him feeling excited at having the chance to test out his newly bought equipment on them. Who knew that the enemies would actually be driven off by his greeting?

All six were at a loss for words. Royal God Call was the first to

recover himself. Revealing a vicious expression on his face, he hurriedly rectified his mistake by sending off an arrow to one of the men walking away.

Royal God Call's bow was called Sniper's Scream, yet the arrow he had fired off from it did not produce a loud whistling sound and instead produced a crisp shrill sound as it sailed through the air.

Swoosh!

"AH!" The arrow made its target gasp for his final breath, which eventually turned into a scream that filled the air.

The screaming person disappeared into a stream of white light. Royal God Call was elated, as he had never experienced insta-killing a player of the same level before. While he could insta-kill any player at level 30 or lower, such a feat was just like how the common saying on the internet put it: "Insta-killing a noob is never amazing. It's only amazing when one can insta-kill a player of the same level." The self-proclaimed top-expert Royal God Call had been after this achievement, but his equipment had unfortunately not been up to par. Thanks to his newly bought equipment, he could finally experience this kind of exhilaration once more.

Having accomplished the feat, Royal God Call grabbed Gu Fei, "Enhanced Snipe! Snipe is enhanced!" Among them, only Gu Fei had tasted the joy of insta-killing a player of the same level, which was something Royal God Call had been envious of for the longest time.

"What are you on about?! Get outta the way!" Gu Fei shoved Royal God Call to the side as he picked up his sword to attack.

"No, don't! Leave them to your bros!" War Without Wounds hurriedly shouted, fearing that Gu Fei would cast a spell that would kill off all their enemies.

"You don't understand anything about me!" Gu Fei said to War

Without Wounds in frustration before rushing down the hill.

Sword Demon did not let himself to be outdone by Gu Fei. Pulling out his dagger, he then activated Fleetfoot and chased after Gu Fei.

“Oh, f*ck! Wait for me, you two!” War Without Wounds was in tears as he charged after the two down the hill.

“Blessings! Don’t you guys want my blessings?!” Brother Assist quickly waved his staff about, yet he only managed to grant Blessing of Strength on War Without Wounds.

“Go ahead and run along. I won’t heal you guys if you leave my range!” Young Master Han said indifferently. He then decisively sat on the ground and took out another bottle of liquor.

Young Master’s Elite also strongly lacked unity at this moment, but this was only because these experts did not need to team up just to dispose of four enemies.

Gu Fei sprinted down the hill first, yet Sword Demon swiftly caught up to him, seemingly even able to accelerate past him now. This gave Gu Fei quite the scare. Having allocated all his points into Agility and having afforded of the additional movement speed trait of Windchaser’s Boots, the Mage Gu Fei had always bested the Thief Sword Demon in terms of speed. Before, Sword Demon could only match Gu Fei’s speed by activating Fleetfoot. Right now, however, he appeared to be even slightly faster than Gu Fei and seemed to be capable of leaving the latter in the dust.

“Did you change your footwear?” Gu Fei asked.

Sword Demon smiled, “Windchaser’s Boots.”

“Oh! You got a pair, too!”

Sword Demon nodded his head.

“Was it tough? You should have told me; I would have lent you my Windchaser’s Emblem!” Gu Fei said.

“It’s okay. I managed to acquire it in the end,” Sword Demon

said.

Gu Fei was thoroughly impressed. Completing one hundred consecutive 'Bounty Mission' was no easy feat. Royal God Call risked failing the task without Gu Fei's help, so he could say that Sword Demon was truly a first-rate expert in comparison.

As the two men exchanged casual words with each other, the remaining four enemies came to the realization that the six men atop the hill were not from their guild. They regretted their carelessness, as it had cost the life of their companion! When they saw the two men sprinting down the hill toward them, the four men yelled in unison, "CHARGE!" Two of the enemies went forward to engage Gu Fei and Sword Demon, while the other two arched their bows. The enemies were made up of Thieves and Archers, so their movement speed was fast as well.

The Grand Kiting strategy relied on fast movement speed to drag the time out. The enemy men assumed that their high movement speed could naturally counter this strategy, yet their thoughts were too short-sighted about this. Believing that Gu Fei and his fellow mercenaries were only able to run these players with very high movement speed, they inadvertently revealed their weakness: they had low HP.

Sword Demon rushed toward the Thieves on Fleetfoot before suddenly veering toward the two Archers. "I'll leave these two to you!" Sword Demon yelled as he brushed past the two enemy Thieves.

"Aye! You gotta give me cover!" Gu Fei acquiesced.

Sword Demon was stunned, "Cover for what?" With Gu Fei's skill, Sword Demon was only worried that he would slay all of the enemies without leaving one to him. Therefore, why would Gu Fei need someone to cover him? He looked backward, just in time to see Gu Fei knock off a high-speed arrow with Moonlit Nightfalls.

"What high hit rate!" Sword Demon commented using gaming

term.

“That’s cheating! You can’t do that!” Royal God Call yelled from afar. He had been aiming for the two Thieves, yet Gu Fei and Sword Demon had effectively blocked his firing line by charging forward. Just as he had changed his target over to the two Archers, Sword Demon had suddenly appeared right before them.

Royal God Call quickly fired off an arrow as he assumed that Sword Demon was coordinating with him at the moment. Unfortunately for him, Sword Demon was actually coordinating his attacks with Gu Fei. Expecting Royal God Call to fire off another arrow from atop the hill, he positioned himself to the side to better bat away the incoming arrow with his dagger. This made Royal God Call incessantly curse in rage.

Gu Fei raised his left hand and flashed Royal God Call a ‘victory’ sign. He then swung Moonlit Nightfalls in his right hand across the two Thieves’ chests as he chanted, “Twin Incineration! Incinerate!”

Gu Fei continued to dash forward after insta-killing the low HP Thieves with that one slash on Twin Incineration. The Thief job class had no means to survive Gu Fei’s high Spell Damage and his sword’s Physical Damage, so the two Thieves expectedly turned into streams of white light even before Gu Fei passed through where they once stood. Sword Demon turned his head to see Gu Fei deflect Royal God Call’s arrow, but before he could turn his head back to look at the enemy Archers, Gu Fei was already hurtling over to his direction.

“You’re too greedy! Aren’t two kills enough for you?!” Sword Demon smilingly asked.

Gu Fei merely smiled back. Seeing that he could not catch up to Sword Demon, he decided to activate Blink.

The two Archers were each aiming at Gu Fei and Sword Demon respectively. Sword Demon skillfully ran in a serpentine motion to

prevent the Archers from locking on to him, while Gu Fei simply dashed in a straight line. Just as the Archers were about to fire off arrows, Gu Fei disappeared from his position and appeared five meters closer to the enemies.

Blink was truly an instant-movement skill, as it allowed Gu Fei to appear at a new location at the same time he disappeared from his original position without losing a millisecond. While an onlooker would not be able to see Gu Fei's disappearance from his original position, the person would be able to see his reappearance at another location.

When the Archer Gu Fei was targeting saw this happen, he blinked his eyes twice in disbelief. This gave Gu Fei ample time to reach the target.

"Take that!" Afraid that his spell would coincidentally kill off the other Archer Sword Demon was targeting, Gu Fei thrust his sword forward without Twin Incineration. Out of respect for the only morally upright member of Young Master's Elite, Gu Fei had restricted his attack so that Sword Demon's effort of running all the way here would not go to waste.

Sword Demon was upon the other Archer now. Just like any other Archers, the one Sword Demon was facing got flustered when he engaged him in melee. Circling the back of the Archer, he swiftly plunged his dagger right in.

"That's..." Gu Fei noticed that Sword Demon's moves just then greatly resembled Svelte Dancer's fighting style on Fleetfoot. But for a number of reasons, Sword Demon had yet to reach Svelte Dancer's level of elegance and adroitness. These reasons were Sword Demon's lack of equipment that could further raise his Agility, his limited experience at executing such moves, and his... zero ounce of elegance. While Svelte Dancer would exude grace when she was executing those moves, Sword Demon's use of the same moves could only be described as... demonic. Even Gu Fei, who had a favorable impression of Sword Demon, would

vehemently disagree if someone said that the latter's combat movement was exquisite, as that would just be sarcasm – complete sarcasm!

Gu Fei and Sword Demon made short work of the two panicked Archers. Feeling comradeship toward Sword Demon, Gu Fei let him deal the killing blow to the remaining Archer as well. Sword Demon did not decline his offer and briskly slew the Archer with a stab of his dagger.

War Without Wounds, who was still meters away from the skirmish, let loose a rage-filled roar, as Royal God Call incessantly fired off messages on the mercenary channel, “MILES IS SHAMELESS! DOCK HIS POINTS! MILES IS SHAMELESS! DOCK HIS POINTS! MILES....”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t see any of that,” Sword Demon casually replied as he smiled at Gu Fei, repaying Gu Fei’s kind gesture moments ago.

“A bunch of people is coming from 278, 345 direction. Take care of them!” Amid Royal God Call’s streams of messages, Young Master Han sent off this instruction on the mercenary channel.

Chapter 214 - Surround them! (I)

Young Master's Elite mercenary group already took the lead with a score of 5 against 0 by eliminating the five enemies, yet High Cloud mercenary group still continued to run all over the PvP arena like headless flies. None of High Cloud's remaining members seemed to know who those five were, and when Guild Leader Cirrus asked the five to identify themselves on the mercenary channel, the five did not even bother to reply to him.

Young Master's Elite was supposed to be at a disadvantage in this six-versus-eighty match, yet the six instead found themselves easily sweeping through the PvP arena and casually slaying any enemies they encountered along the way.

The High Cloud's core members tried to gather their forces, but they could only muster a team of up to eleven men. While such a team would be enough to deal with any average six-man party, they were currently up against a group of top gaming experts. Therefore, the eleven men did not elicit even a sliver of apprehension in Young Master's Elite that had the indomitable Gu Fei in it.

Since the capable members of Young Master's Elite hardly sustained any injury as they took down the enemies on their path, Young Master Han rarely had to bestow Heal on them, so he merely continued drinking liquor to his heart's content as he littered the map with his empty bottles. While his fellow mercenaries had no question regarding his capability to hold his liquor, they could not help but wonder as to how much liquid his stomach could contain. In the end, they concluded that this must be another area of realism that the system had decided to ignore.

Out of all of them, War Without Wounds was the most depressed. Gu Fei, Sword Demon, Royal God Call, and he were the damage dealers of their group, but he barely got any chance to kill any enemies since he possessed neither ranged attacks nor fast

speed like the other three.

In no time at all, the participating players of High Cloud mercenary group dropped down to thirty, as the other fifty players were sent out of the PvP arena by Young Master's Elite. War Without Wounds only managed to earn himself two kill points all this time, while Gu Fei naturally attained the highest number of kills.

Gu Fei's prowess, Sword Demon's determination, Royal God Call's opportunism, Brother Assist's endless blessings, Young Master Han's alcoholism, as well as War Without Wounds' forlorn wails created the identifying image of Young Master's Elite in the hearts of many High Cloud's men.

Young Master's Elite barely encountered any new enemies now after reducing High Cloud's numbers. But with a score of 50 against 0, Young Master's Elite's victory was as good as assured, so the six men were not in a hurry to pursue the remaining thirty players of High Cloud. Since the enemies took it upon themselves to scatter all over the map, the six men did not waste effort on employing the Grand Kiting strategy as well.

"Argh! It's been so long since we last saw anyone!" Royal God Call had become the unofficial scout of Young Master's Elite due to his Eagle Eye skill, and he continuously scanned their surroundings as their group leisurely proceeded forward. Royal God Call would often irresponsibly take advantage of his skill and ranged attack to sneakily shoot an arrow or two first at any sighted enemies before informing the rest of the group about them. Gu Fei and Sword Demon eventually learned to work with this; they would ignore anything Royal God Call said but would instantly become alert for any possible enemy movement once they saw him lift his bow.

"Ah!" Young Master Han suddenly exclaimed, "I'm out of liquor!" His right hand came away with nothing after rifling through his dimensional pocket for a long time. As everyone

gawked at him, he emphatically declared, “Guess it’s about time for our final showdown!”

“Oh?” the five men expressed their puzzlement.

Young Master Han looked behind him, “I’ve left a trail of empty bottles as we advanced. If they truly intend to deal with us, they’ll track us through those. Since the thirty of them have yet to show themselves before us, I suppose that they must be preparing for one final attempt to take us down.”

“Do you mean to say that our opponents no longer plan to fight separately?” Brother Assist asked.

Young Master Han nodded his head, “We’ve killed fifty of them. They should know by now that we are difficult to deal with separately. With thirty of them gathered together, it will probably take some time for them to organize themselves, since they have never worked together before.”

“So how do you know that they are about to begin their final assault?”

“I don’t. I’m outta booze right now. I want us to quickly finish them off, so I can buy some,” Young Master Han replied.

“Tsk!” everyone scoffed.

“So how are we gonna deal with them now that they have gathered together?” Brother Assist asked.

“Surround them!” Gu Fei declared as he flourished his Moonlit Nightfalls that had already taken the lives of many enemies in today’s match.

“That’s a pretty bold move...” Brother Assist critiqued as his eyes darted to the rest of them, mainly lingering over at Young Master Han.

“Surround them... Mhm. That’s a pretty good idea!” Young Master Han actually expressed his agreement to Gu Fei’s

suggestion.

This almost caused Brother Assist's eyes to pop out, "Looks like even you can get drunk." With that, he looked at the others. Sword Demon, Royal God Call, and War Without Wounds were eagerly rubbing their fists with a malevolent expression on their faces. War Without Wounds even declared, "F*ck, yeah! I'll make sure to properly earn kill points this time!"

"Hey, is this really doable? There are thirty of them and there are only six of us!" Brother Assist reminded everyone.

"Your fighting experience is really lacking, Assist. It's not even at the level of this noob Miles," Royal God Call was wiping his bow when he said this. His eyes were steely and his body was firm. He had adopted a disposition akin to a hitman assembling the parts of his rifle piece by piece right before he made his killing.

Gu Fei had a placid smile on his lips as he pointed to himself, "I'm a professional slayer."

"It's going to be fine, Assist. You're being too cautious." It was Sword Demon's words that had finally assured Brother Assist, as he had the most faith in their party's most honest and reliable member.

"Look! Is that them over there?" Young Master Han pointed to a certain direction. While no human figure could be distinguished, dust could be seen getting disturbed in that direction.

Royal God Call exaggeratedly looked at the indicated direction with his Eagle Eye for a while before saying, "Looks like men are heading toward us."

"Let's go!" All lifted their weapons as they moved to advance toward the incoming enemies.

"Miles, take the 9 o'clock direction. Sword Demon, move to 12 o'clock as you clear a path for Royal to take the 3 o'clock direction. Wounds and Brother Assist, the three of us are taking the 6 o'clock

direction!” Young Master Han commanded everyone.

Gu Fei, Sword Demon, and Royal God Call headed toward their assigned locations.

“Brother Assist, give me Blessing of Health!” War Without Wounds growled. His expression grew serious once the enemies appeared in his line of sight.

“Gotcha!” Brother Assist nodded his head. A Knight actually held a more important role in supporting others during a PvP than a Priest. In Parallel World, every character could only receive one stat buff at a given time, so while any type of blessing was welcome, the blessing that would best increase a player’s combat capability was still preferred. Unfortunately, even the most experienced combatants would not usually know which blessings would grant them best effects during fights.

A Knight that had limited exposure to direct clashes would naturally be hard pressed to determine this as well. Therefore, someone like Brother Assist who had a good grasp of all the job classes was crucial to solving this problem. However, it was not enough to just have a superficial understanding of the job classes and a player would also need to be well-versed in it. Such a harsh requirement made any Knights reluctant to claim mastery of their job class. Truly, being in the service industry was not easy.

The members of Young Master’s Elite were fortunately experts that could tell what sort of blessing they needed at a given time, so each of them would inform Brother Assist of which blessing they wished to be given every time. Right now, Brother Assist was only focusing on blessing War Without Wounds, which should theoretically let him reach what every Knight always dreamed of: constant blessing swap.

Technically speaking, a Warrior would need Blessing of Strength when attacking, Blessing of Resilience when being attacked physically, and Blessing of Vitality when being hit by a spell... This

way of providing support was theoretically possible but was realistically unattainable at present, so Brother Assist could only trail after War Without Wounds and grant the type of blessing the latter would request.

At this moment, the thirty men that were fast approaching Young Master's Elite spotted three men charging toward them in an imposing manner.

“Royal, it's time to act. What are you waiting for?!” Young Master Han sent out this message on the mercenary channel.

Royal God Call immediately began his assault. A small hillock was in his sight at the 3 o'clock direction. Assuming a half kneeling and squatting position, he intertwined basic attacks with his skills and unleashed an arrow on Snipe to the approaching squad of thirty men.

“Over there! Over there!” Royal God Call always targeted the weaker-looking targets with his Snipe, insta-killing a Mage this time with his high Physical Damage. Although the enemies were fearful of him, several of them still tried to rush toward Royal God Call.

“Don't go there! Archers, attack!” Cirrus, High Cloud mercenary group's leader, anxiously issued this order. The men who were about to rush toward Royal God Call hesitantly halted their steps, as their Archers began firing arrows at Royal God Call.

No matter how high Royal God Call's Attack Power was, he was only one man. With the Archer job class restriction of only being able to shoot a second arrow after the first arrow finished its attack, Royal God Call could only use the Double Shot skill to fire off two arrows consecutively. Thus, he was easily suppressed by the opponents once they ganged up on him.

“Sword Demon,” Young Master Han called out on the mercenary channel at this moment.

Chapter 215 - Surround them! (II)

“I got it!” Sword Demon answered as he suddenly materialized behind the thirty men, randomly choosing a target to viciously Backstab.

This one stab did not insta-kill the target. The man tried to retaliate, but Sword Demon was already a distance away by the time the man turned around. Just as some of the men tried to break out of their formation to chase after him, Cirrus once more stopped them, “Hold your ground and don’t give chase. Don’t let him close in on us again!”

Hearing Cirrus’s command, the men stopped their steps once more and settled to physically spitting in the direction where Sword Demon had run off to, “Ptooey! Come on! Try to approach us again!”

Sword Demon did not move from his position. Young Master Han smiled thinly and typed on the mercenary channel, “Miles, it’s your turn.”

“I’m on it.” Gu Fei took out his sword and said, “Let’s end this fight quickly!”

Gu Fei leaped out of the ditch he had hidden himself in and quickly dashed toward the High Cloud mercenary group’s PvP formation. The opposing Archers were currently positioned to shoot arrows at Royal God Call, so none of them could fire at Gu Fei to stop his forward sprint. Four more men proactively leaped from the formation to receive him, yet Cirrus once more commanded, “Don’t move. Wait till he gets close and we’ll surround him.”

“What do you mean surround him?! Don’t you see that that person’s a Mage?!” someone among the four angrily yelled.

Cirrus was stunned as he rubbed his eyes, “Mage? What sort of

f*ck*ng Mage runs so fast?”

The four men regarded him contemptuously before charging at Gu Fei.

“Don’t go! Let our Mages deal with him!” Cirrus blurted out, yet the four men turned a deaf ear to his words. Why would they need to be cautious of just one Mage, anyway? The Mages of High Cloud could not help but worry about accidentally killing off their four charging comrades with their AOE spells instead of the lone Mage or their single-target spells accidentally hitting themselves given how clustered they were against their target. Nevertheless, some of them still chose to unleash Repeating Fireball and even Arctic Whirlwind on the empty space between the four men and Gu Fei.

“Translocation! Blink!” Seeing the four men charge toward him, Gu Fei immediately teleported himself behind the four men, which let him avoid the incoming spells as well.

The four men could only look around in confusion when Gu Fei, who had been dashing toward them with reckless abandon, disappeared into thin air. A distance behind the clueless four men, the remaining people in the High Cloud’s PvP formation who had seen the entire scene hurriedly warned the four, “LOOK BEHIND YOU!”

The four men reflexively looked behind them at the voice’s admonition and saw Gu Fei’s sword slashing toward them just in time. The blade that was enveloped by Twin Incineration brushed past their necks.

Gu Fei had finally learned to fight enemies craftily. A Mage only had to speak clearly and concisely to cast a spell. With that being the case, Gu Fei merely murmured the Twin Incineration spell’s incantation and it was activated without a reduction to its damage output.

Gu Fei no longer had any reservations regarding the use of the sword techniques, and even such a vicious move like targeting the

necks of his opponents was employed unrestrainedly. He had never once utilized this particular sword move since he mastered it in reality. This was not because he had no one to exchange blows with, but because he had no way to unrestrainedly use it with his real-life opponents when everyone was merely using wooden swords. Gu Fei's dad even put it nicely for him: "This is just a sparring session to exchange pointers. We're comparing kung fu and not fighting to the death!"

In online games, 'death' merely meant that a player would drop a level, so Gu Fei's reservation about using such a forbidden sword technique was completely gone, inadvertently increasing the kung fu variations he could utilize. His fighting maneuvers became plentiful, so the magnitude in which he could dominate his opponents improved as well. However, Sword Demon and the rest who knew nothing of kung fu failed to notice this qualitative change.

In the end, the three enemies were insta-killed on the spot. The remaining fourth man was still alive, but this was not because Gu Fei had spared his life, but because the four men had been standing apart. As such, Gu Fei had only been able to take down the three men.

Gu Fei ignored the remaining man and charged toward High Cloud's PvP formation, instead. The bunch of players boiled in anger when they saw Gu Fei cut down their three comrades.

What is he? How did he manage to kill off our comrades with that single move? What sort of sword is he holding? A Mage that uses a sword... What in the world is he?! Everyone's heads were filled with all these questions. Gu Fei was almost upon them, so the Mages within their PvP formation hurriedly cast the Fireball spell at him.

Gu Fei wielded his sword to dissipate the balls of fire heading his way and evaded the other spells, such as Repeating Fireball, without slowing his forward momentum toward the enemies'

ranks.

“Unleash AOE spells!” Cirrus barked.

“What AOE spells?! How will those hit him at the speed he’s going?!” the Mages asked Cirrus, feeling incredulous.

While the enemies were at a loss on how they should deal with Gu Fei, Sword Demon once more disappeared under some of the men’s watchful eyes as his Stealth’s cool-down period ended. “Ahhh!” These men hurriedly informed the others, “Mages, over here! The enemy Thief has just activated Stealth!”

“We’re busy here!” The Mages, who were currently bombarding Gu Fei, did not even look at their direction.

“D*MM*T! You stopped us when we tried to attack the Thief moments ago! What do we do now that he’s entered Stealth again?!” Several men angrily asked Cirrus.

It was at this moment that an arrow swiftly flew toward the Archers’ ranks. Royal God Call could only insta-kill others using the Snipe skill. Sadly, he could only fire off arrow on Snipe once every 45 seconds, and the shooting preparation for such a formidable skill was rather long as well. Under the suppression of the enemy Archers, Royal God Call barely managed to insta-kill one of them.

Some of the Archers were abruptly angered by this and told Cirrus, “Send some men to slay that Archer! How long are we gonna be exchanging shots like this?”

Cirrus felt completely perplexed at how to proceed. It was already a tall task to get this bunch of men to collaborate with one another for this one assault. In the end, the arrows of Royal God Call, the sneaky stabs of Sword Demon, and the oppressive attacks of Gu Fei had left the men with not even a shred of security. Unable to handle their three aggressors, Cirrus quickly found himself unwittingly becoming the venting outlet of his men.

The men's earlier criticisms about Cirrus began to resurface again, and they all started to argue with one another. The Mages were telling the Archers to hold off Gu Fei, the Thieves were saying to the Mages to bombard Sword Demon, and the Archers were directing the Thieves to ambush Royal God Call.

Each of them believed that their judgment was the best way to extricate the group from this situation, and all of them refused to heed one another's advice. The players of High Cloud continued to bicker like this despite the messy situation that they were currently in, so it was not surprising that the Thieves who were calling for the Mages' aid ended up being viciously stabbed by Sword Demon, the Archers who were yelling for the Thieves' support were picked off one by one by Royal God Call, and the Mages who were at a disadvantage in melee were massacred by Gu Fei.

Sword Demon quickly retreated after plunging his dagger into an enemy. Scoring a headshot, Royal God Call readied another arrow on Snipe. Gu Fei, for his part, swung his sword toward the Mages without any spells.

“Warriors! Where the f*ck are you guys?!”

“Mages, that Thief is about to sneak away again!”

“Where are the Thieves?! Have you lot killed that Archer yet?!”

All continued to call for the various job classes for help. They could not help but think that they were in the worst mercenary group ever. Eventually, all of them began to call for their friends.

“Xiaoshui, come and blast that Thief!”

“Wild Boar, come and block the Mage!”

“Nebby, enter Stealth and kill that Archer!”

The thirty-man group that Cirrus had painstakingly assembled for this assault instantly crumbled and returned to their usual habit of fighting alongside their friends.

However, this bunch of players argued even with their friends. Some said that they should target the Mage first given how fierce he was; the others claimed that the Thief deserved to become the first target as he was treacherous; meanwhile, a few cried that the Archer was utterly despicable and therefore deserved to be prioritized.

With all of them insisting for the others to eliminate their respective targets, they could hardly put any resistance to the three. In fact, Sword Demon easily found a chance to kill off an enemy player, which was truly a laudable feat, given how his current Attack Power was no match for Royal God Call or Gu Fei's.

"Can I go yet?!" War Without Wounds remained motionless this whole time. Judging that it was time for him to participate in the ongoing skirmish in the distance, he hurriedly asked Young Master Han for permission.

"What for? The three of them are already enough to handle the enemies," Young Master Han replied.

War Without Wounds' eyes grew as wide as a camel's, "So what are we standing here for?!"

"Us? We're just here to draw the enemies' attention away from Royal, Sword Demon, and Miles and provide an opening for them to initiate a three-pronged attack. Thanks to us, Royal's ranged arrows, Sword Demon's sneaky stabs, and Miles' oppressive attacks could be executed smoothly," Young Master Han replied.

"Then, what about me? What's my role in all this?" War Without Wounds asked.

"It's to protect Brother Assist and me, of course!" Young Master Han replied.

"Are you kidding me?! I want to earn kill points, too!" War Without Wounds roared as he rushed forward, leaving the two behind.

“The heck. Insisting on doing such grueling work... I simply can’t wrap my head around how you, combat-crazed commoners, think!” Young Master Han said under his breath as he and Brother Assist trailed after War Without Wounds.

As he arrived at the skirmish, War Without Wounds hurriedly lowered his head, charged at the enemies’ formation, and activated Cyclone, felling a few men with his two claymores and allowing him to earn some kill points. With the addition of him, Young Master’s Elite’s fight with the enemies only became easier.

The men of High Cloud mercenary group were no match against the four players of Young Master’s Elite, so when several of them caught sight of the Priest Young Master Han and the Knight Brother Assist, they immediately proceeded to charge at the two, thinking that they were easier targets to deal with. It was truly a rare display of unity among these men.

“We have no choice. Guess you gotta go,” Young Master Han sighed to Brother Assist. Knights had better combat strength than Priests, after all.

Brother Assist was a different breed to his fellow mercenaries. Having chosen a support job class this time in Parallel World, he truly had no combat experience to speak of. His heart thumped audibly when he saw the bloodthirsty individuals pouncing on them like tigers on gazelles.

Just as Brother Assist was about to shut his eyes, a figure appeared before him. Gu Fei materialized in the path of these men in the nick of time. Roaring his Twin Incineration, he wiped two of the incoming men off the face of the map.

The remaining three players looked as if their souls had departed their bodies, turning around to flee as they shrieked endlessly, “It’s another Mage! A MAGE THAT LOOKS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THAT OTHER MAGE!”

Chapter 216 - Reap through the Battlefield

Young Master Han and Brother Assist did not expect for Gu Fei to have such a keen overview of the entire PvP that he even took note of their plight despite being deeply involved in the slaughter in the distance.

“Thanks!” Brother Assist said even as fear lingered in him. He knew very well that he could last for several minutes at most against the five enemies surrounding him even with Young Master Han’s superb healing.

“Mhm-mhm!” Gu Fei gave a muffled reply to Brother Assist as he continued to stand on one spot with his back facing the two.

“Go and kill some more!” Young Master Han urged Gu Fei from behind. The enemies’ ranks were currently in turmoil in more ways than one. With every enemy fighting them independently and not one of them matching their skills, victory was within reach of Young Master’s Elite.

Gu Fei slowly turned around and removed the apple stuck in his mouth, “Wait a sec. I’m out of mana.”

The two were speechless.

“Your low mana is really troublesome!” Brother Assist sighed. The Attack Power of the mana-depleted Gu Fei was weak. This would not be an issue if he was up against one person. Unfortunately, right now, he was facing more than one opponent. If the opponents wised up about his low mana, they would surely feel emboldened to risk their lives against him. Warriors and other job classes that had high defense equipment would hardly be damaged by his Moonlit Nightfalls since Gu Fei had yet to fulfill its Sword Aptitude requirement to fully utilize the sword’s physical attack.

Back on the PvP field, War Without Wounds began to clear out

the space around him by unleashing a prolonged duration of Cyclone via the Rage points he had accumulated thus far. It was at this point that Brother Assist noticed that High Cloud was down to the last fourteen men, and almost all of them were bearing wounds from the extended fighting. By now, Sword Demon, Royal God Call, and War Without Wounds were flawlessly coordinating their attacks with one another – a combat aspect that Gu Fei was not good at; the targets that Royal God Call's arrow could not insta-kill would be finish off by Sword Demon's sneaky stabs, while Royal God Call would dispose of the surviving targets of War Without Wounds' Cyclone with his arrows from afar.

When Gu Fei saw the three men rapidly reaping through the PvP field as well, he could not help but be crestfallen. At this rate, the entire enemy squad would be wiped out by the time he finished eating his apple!

“Slow down, guys! Kill them slowly! Leave some for me!” Gu Fei anxiously shouted at the three.

The three men hastened their killings even more when they heard of his request. It had always been them doing the pleading to Gu Fei to be less vicious and leave some kills for them before. Now that they finally turned the tables on him, why would they not seize this chance to relish the experience?

Cirrus felt utter despair. His mercenary group clearly still held numerical superiority even now, yet the opponents were already arguing over kill points among themselves. Just where did this bunch of ferocious people come from?

The same question floated in everyone's minds at present. To others, Young Master's Elite was the very definition of an insurmountable existence. With War Without Wounds and Royal God Call's acquisition of new equipment, they became even stronger than the average players in terms of skills or gear. They also had no way to fathom or gauge Gu Fei's fighting prowess. Thinking about all these had only left the players of High Cloud

with quite a headache.

However, what really caused these people grief was Sword Demon. He clearly did not possess War Without Wounds and Royal God Call's first-rate equipment, yet his skillful utilization of his superior speed allowed him to attack and evade the enemies like a ghost. He never faced an enemy head on, leaving the squad of enemies unable to deal with him. In short, he was an itch that they could not get rid of no matter what.

"AHHHH!" Gu Fei, who cared more about the lives of High Cloud's men than Young Master's Elite's few individuals, chewed his apple as fast as he could. Knowing that there would no longer be any enemies left for him to strike down if he continued to munch on the apple, he decisively abandoned eating the fruit despite only recovering half of his mana and shouted, "I'M COMING!" He then blinked himself right into the fray.

"The Mage is back!" the remaining men of High Cloud exclaimed. All of them scrambled to leave a huge space all around Gu Fei that was far emptier than the space War Without Wounds had cleared out with his Cyclone.

Gu Fei picked a target to chase as he scanned the PvP field with sorrow-filled eyes. Naturally, chasing after a target with his fast movement speed was not a problem. Finishing off the man by casting Twin Incineration, Gu Fei turned to look and saw that High Cloud's men had taken the opportunity when he was distracted to maintain a five-meter distance from Gu Fei. Not one of them dared to challenge him.

Gu Fei only had to attack the enemies and they would retreat in response, regardless if they were clashing with War Without Wounds or Sword Demon.

"What are you doing here?!" War Without Wounds asked, feeling disgruntled. Since he did not have the speed to chase after the enemies who were fast retreating, he could only earn this bit of kill

points in the end.

“Chase after them quickly!” Gu Fei ignored him and chased after the enemies together with Sword Demon.

“I knew it!” War Without Wounds grumbled, knowing that he would not have any chance to earn additional kill points now. Indeed, the enemies that were running just ahead of him were easily taken care of by Gu Fei and Sword Demon.

High Cloud still had ten men left, including the group leader Cirrus. Now that it had gotten to this stage, these ten had all stopped their squabbles to unite against the opposing group. Cirrus, along with the other two Water Mages, turned around and cast Arctic Whirlwind to block Gu Fei and Sword Demon’s advance and to drive away the two instead.

“Archers, unleash your Homing Projectile!” Cirrus barked. Those who could survive up to this point were mainly the job classes with fast movement speed, so the group still had two Archers in their midst. Hearing Cirrus’s command, the two men each fired off an arrow on Homing Projectile.

“Thieves!” At Cirrus’s shout, three Thieves activated their Stealth and tried to get closer to the targets.

This was how a group PvP usually worked; it did not matter how brilliant each issued command was, and as long the men all obeyed it, it would always be better than everyone acting separately. At least, they would put up a better defense against the enemies now.

The spells of Arctic Whirlwind and arrows on Homing Projectile headed their way. Adding the Thieves on Stealth who were most likely waiting for a chance to strike, the enemies had truly mounted a threatening counterattack. Unfortunately for them, they were matched up against Gu Fei.

Lifting his hand with a sword, he batted off the arrow on Homing Projectile coming his way. Meanwhile, Arctic Whirlwind was still

preventing Gu Fei from closing in on the enemies. Should he use Blink to get past it? Sadly, Gu Fei did not have enough mana to cast that spell.

This thought reminded Gu Fei of a spell he had yet to use in PvP. He raised his sword and pointed it toward a Mage, “Thunderbolt! Strike!”

A streak of lightning pealed from the sky and blackened the ground surrounding the target upon contact, sending the Mage out of the PvP arena right there and then. Gu Fei’s high Spell Damage was no joke. Almost all of the remaining players with Cirrus were already injured at this point, so not one of them would be able to withstand that spell Gu Fei cast.

Just as his spell landed, Gu Fei took this chance to rush through the Arctic Whirlwind, emerging on the other side unharmed.

Gu Fei knew by now that any spell a Mage had cast prior to his or her death would lose its Attack Power.

As expected, the Arctic Whirlwind of the enemy Mage instantly turned into a cool and gentle breeze once the person turned into a stream white light. Gu Fei charged headlong to the spell’s nucleus, and when he smoothly passed through it, he immediately closed in on the remaining opponents.

Gu Fei’s only regret was that he had run out of mana, so Moonlit Nightfalls’ basic attack could only interrupt the other two Mages’ Arctic Whirlwind and free Sword Demon from their entanglement to sprint forward as well. Sword Demon ignored the arrow fired with the Homing Projectile skill that was heading straight to him, as he judged that it would be unable to insta-kill him – unless the person firing it had Attack Power that could insta-kill someone.

“Be careful. There’s a Thief eyeing you,” Gu Fei warned Sword Demon.

Three Thieves were currently on Stealth in the opposing group.

Gu Fei could sense that two of them had their attention on him, which meant that the last man had his eye on Sword Demon. War Without Wounds who was still hurrying over... Not one Thief out there would probably entertain the notion of taking on a Warrior alone.

Sword Demon flashed him a smile and quickly stopped his forward advance. Instead, he took two steps backward and activated Stealth as well.

“F*ck!” Gu Fei immediately sensed that all three Thieves had turned their attention on to him, and one of them was even right behind him.

Gu Fei sidestepped to dodge the arrow from an Archer before performing a spinning hook to the person behind him.

Since there was no known skill that could counter Stealth at present, the hidden Thief was not the least bit on guard for Gu Fei’s attack right now. When Gu Fei launched a kick in his direction, the Thief did not even make a move to block it. Receiving a foot imprint on his face, the Thief revealed himself as his heart surged with conflicting emotions.

Gu Fei took three steps backward and cut the sword to the side. The Thief who had received this blow dropped his dagger, which clattered to the ground.

Gu Fei adjusted the direction he was facing and headed toward the third Thief. This Thief sensed that something was amiss when he saw Gu Fei running toward him, so he revealed himself with an anxious expression on his face. He was so anxious that he forgot to attack the target despite his skills being at a ready. Meanwhile, Sword Demon used the chance his invisible state had provided him to assassinate one of the Archers.

High Cloud’s PvP formation had one Warrior left, but under Gu Fei and Sword Demon’s speedy assault, he could not reach either of them in time. The two men weaved among their opponents and

hindered every move the Archer and Mages were attempting to do. The three Thieves from before were still confounded by all that that had happened!

War Without Wounds, Royal God Call, Young Master Han, and Brother Assist. With every member of Young Master's Elite finally engaging the enemies properly, the remaining PvP participants of High Cloud were very quickly taken care of. Gu Fei, who insisted on participating in the fight despite his zero mana, did not manage to steal kill points from the others with how weak his attack had become. Despite not managing to get any sort of record, he felt that today's match was ultimately enjoyable. After all, he was someone who thought that the process was very important.

The six-man group of Young Master's Elite achieved a 'perfect' score over the eighty-man group of High Cloud.

Although the members of High Cloud mercenary group knew that they had plenty of internal issues, such a result still left them completely baffled.

By the time Gu Fei and the gang were teleported out of the PvP arena, a few members of High Cloud had already proceeded to leave the place, all of them exchanging puzzled looks as they stared at the six victorious men.

Cirrus, High Cloud mercenary group's leader, took this chance to approach the six men. "Gentlemen..." he said in greeting. As the six men turned to look at him, he asked, "Would you guys be willing to let me join your mercenary group?" His question left the five men absolutely stunned.

Chapter 217 - Interviewing after Young Master's Elite

Only Gu Fei did not react to High Cloud mercenary group leader Cirrus's request, as he knew nothing of the underlying implication behind the latter's request. The founder of a mercenary group had to pay an exorbitant sum to the system when he or she was establishing it, and to raise a group to level 4 like the High Cloud mercenary group... It could be seen how difficult this task was just from the fact that Yunduan City currently had few level 5 mercenary groups. For most people, even if they were unhappy with their mercenary groups, the most they would do was kick existing members and recruit new members once more to improve the groups' overall strength. As for Cirrus, he was actually thinking of abandoning his mercenary group just to join Young Master's Elite.

Cirrus let his action speak for him, and the members of High Cloud behind him suddenly exclaimed in shock, "Leader Cirrus just left the group!" Leaders could disband their mercenary groups. Fortunately, Cirrus was not that inconsiderate, and he merely opted to quit High Cloud of his volition. When a mercenary group leader quit, the vice group leader would automatically take over his post.

Hearing the surprised exclamation of the members of High Cloud, Gu Fei turned his head to address Young Master Han, "Who's our vice group leader?"

"Our group only has six members, so why would we need a vice group leader for?" Young Master Han answered sarcastically as he waved his hand grandly.

From this exchange, Cirrus found out that Young Master Han was this mercenary group's leader, so he sincerely focused his gaze on him half the time.

“Ahem. Treat me to a few rounds of drinks first and I’ll consider your request,” Young Master Han said.

“Ugh! You’re so corrupt!” War Without Wounds expressed his indignation when he heard Young Master Han’s extorting attempt. However, his negative reaction was not due to him having high sense of justice but merely due to him not being interested in imbibing liquor. In the end, he suggested, “Why don’t we make him pay a membership, instead?!”

“Membership? That’s right! Members should pay me membership fee!” Having an epiphany, Young Master Han exclaimed in agreement, “You five should pay me as well, being members of my mercenary group and all. Let me set the rule: All members must pay the group leader 10 gold coins as membership fee every day.”

“Shameless!” all of them cried out in frustration. Some members of High Cloud who had overheard their conversation also voiced their disdain regarding Young Master Han’s attempt to earn money from his fellow mercenaries.

“I think you shouldn’t trust this type of person,” Gu Fei seriously advised Cirrus, knowing full well that the latter had already resolved to treat Young Master Han to a round of drinks at the other’s request.

“I strongly concur,” War Without Wounds solemnly nodded his head.

“I, too!” Royal God Call seconded.

Cirrus felt stunned at these few men’s antics of ridiculing and badmouthing one another without hesitation. This atmosphere was very similar to his High Cloud mercenary group. In fact, Young Master’s Elite was even worse compared to High Cloud when it only had six men.

Cirrus watched the six men bicker on as they walked away.

Mmm... I'll observe them in greater detail first! he decided not to pursue the six men for now. Turning around, he saw his ex-mercenary companions still standing beside the teleportation array. Uhm... This is kinda awkward. But they probably don't think of me as their comrade to begin with, anyway! Cirrus smiled wryly and quietly left without bidding any of them goodbye.

"Actually, we do need to find a Mage for our group," Brother Assist suddenly said after they had walked for quite a distance.

Gu Fei did not say a word, knowing that he did not really count as a Mage. Although his Magic Attack Power was insanely high, he could only cast three or five spells and would have to eat fruit afterward to replenish his limited mana pool.

"Cirrus's skill as a Mage is pretty average," Royal God Call opined.

"Yeah... His equipment is so-so, as well," Brother Assist added.

"His skills at giving commands are acceptable, but I'm still far better. More importantly, he can't hold a candle to my looks," Young Master Han said. As none of his fellow mercenaries bothered to comment at his words, he merely concluded, "In short, he does not meet the criteria we have for our group."

"There are few elites out there, so we can just nurture one," Sword Demon suggested.

"Let's look around for someone with potential; we're not really in a hurry to acquire a new member, anyway," Young Master Han drawled, showing his lack of interest in adding new members to the mercenary group.

Although the rest of them were discussing the matter, they were not really that into developing Young Master's Elite further, given Young Master Han's leadership style. This mercenary group was no more than an avenue of entertainment to all of them. Frankly speaking, they were more concerned with increasing their fame

than enhancing this mercenary group. Moreover, it was currently not ideal to develop the group since the Five Unyielding Experts were the foremost experts the public had acknowledged to dominate Parallel World. Young Master Han and the lot were no more than hidden powers biding their time in Young Master's Elite. They were in a whole different ball game altogether.

“Man, it's so fun killing in today's match!” All of them moved on from discussing about recruiting a new mercenary for their group into the activities they had in today's match. War Without Wounds was flexing his muscles; it was rare for him to get a chance like today to gain kill points with this bunch of experts.

“Still, won't Young Master's previous set up be for naught now?” As usual, Brother Assist was being a worrywart.

Young Master Han merely laughed his worry off, “In today's match, our purpose is to gain a bit of fame. Right now, our names have become pretty well-known. The way we fought this match would most likely throw any mercenary group that we meet from here onward into a tizzy. I feel that things are about to get interesting now.”

Everything had more or less unfolded as Young Master Han had intended. Young Master's Elite's win brought the six men into the quarterfinals. No mercenary group out there would believe Young Master's Elite had just merely gotten lucky to reach this far in the mercenary PvP tournament.

This was especially the case after Young Master's Elite's match with High Cloud. No matter how severe High Cloud's internal conflict, Young Master's Elite's utter demolition of its eighty-man group without one casualty or employing the Grand Kiting strategy only made the group appear all the more horrifying.

High Cloud's players hailed from various guilds in Yunduan City. Therefore, the frightening might that Young Master's Elite had displayed in this match alone spread very fast.

Mage! Mage! Mage! The main topic of everyone's conversation was Young Master's Elite's Mage.

The players of Yunduan City were in a daze. Why was it that from the open beta days until now, any topic in Yunduan City would always be about Mages?

That vicious slayer 27149 was a Mage; the player that went about doing 'Bounty Mission' in Yunduan City was also a Mage; the recent buzz was pertaining to an Insta-kill Mage as well; now, there was yet another rumor about a Mage that knew how to duplicate himself.

Was the strongest job class in Parallel World actually the Mage? Players who had not chosen the Mage job class began to feel regret, while those who had chosen to be a Mage started to feel fired up.

Most people were no longer worrying about how to deal with Young Master's Elite. They, just like Young Master Han, were hoping that other mercenary groups would be dealt the unlucky hand instead of themselves.

Since Young Master's Elite could demolish an eighty-man mercenary group, a group with less than that number would simply be insufficient to deal with Young Master's Elite. If the remaining mercenary groups in the tournament were to mobilize their entire force against Young Master's Elite, the said mercenary group would simply fall back to using its Grand Kiting strategy upon realizing that it had no means to take them head on.

Their hands were essentially tied no matter how they proceeded to deal with Young Master's Elite, so the seven mercenary groups were currently hard at work on finding ways to defeat the six-man mercenary group.

This was even more the case for Yunduan City's number one mercenary group, Four Seas of Traversing Four Seas Guild, since it was matched up with Young Master's Elite in the quarterfinals. Four Seas was very anxious at the thought of crossing swords with

Young Master's Elite.

In fact, Four Seas group leader Youthful Reflection, a talented strategist who also assumed the role of Traversing Four Seas Guild's military advisor, stayed up all night trying to come up with the most appropriate method to deal with Young Master's Elite.

It was just as what Sun Tzu's Art of War had detailed: "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles." Guided by this statement, Youthful Reflection spent a whole night interviewing the past PvP tournament opponents of Young Master's Elite.

Cloud Herder mercenary group was filled with resentment toward Young Master's Elite's Grand Kiting strategy; High Cloud mercenary group still had lingering fear toward the PvP might of Young Master's Elite; Amethyst mercenary group, meanwhile, was on Young Master's Elite side despite losing to the latter and treated any person who would come to inquire for information rather coldly; as for all the other random small mercenary groups, Youthful Reflection could not find a way to contact them to ask about Young Master's Elite; in the end, only Silver Moon mercenary group's leader, Silver Moon, provided Youthful Reflection with some useful information.

Sword Demon, Brother Assist, War Without Wounds, and Royal God Call! Just hearing these names had caused him to break out in cold sweat. Young Master's Elite was indeed worthy of its name, as each member of the group was truly elite. Royal God Call was a member of Traversing Four Seas and was an Archer just like him, so Youthful Reflection had the chance to get to know him. Although he was just a brat with barely passable attitude, his gaming skills were definitely not run of the mill and his equipment was above average. Unfortunately for Youthful Reflection, he was unaware that Royal God Call's equipment had been replaced by top-notch gear last night.

War Without Wounds held the title of the number one Warrior

in the MMO community. He had held on to that position during the first few weeks of Parallel World, yet an unknown reason had eventually caused his leveling speed to significantly drop to the point of others catching up to and surpassing him. Right now, the title as the number one Warrior of Parallel World was being held by Southern Lone Blade of the Five Unyielding Experts. Had it not been for that lapse in War Without Wounds' leveling efficiency, he would have been among the Five Unyielding Experts himself. At present, he was ranked third on the Warrior leaderboard.

Sword Demon was a name that needed no further introduction. Anyone who dared to call himself or herself as a gamer would know of this IGN. It was rumored that he had set up the Heaven-defying Guild during Parallel World's open beta days, but for some unknown reason, the members had ended up deserting his guild early on. From then on, he had kept himself from the public's eyes. His name never appeared in any other guilds, either. Who knew that he would be nestling in this small mercenary group, instead? Sword Demon was highly ranked on the Thief leaderboard at first, but just like War Without Wounds, he had suffered a sudden drop at some point in time. Many concluded that he must have dropped a level as a result of dying. Currently, he was ranked eighth on the Thief leaderboard – no, wait; he should be ranked seventh right now. Youthful Reflection looked at the most updated level rankings he had just received: the Thief Dusky Cloud who was originally ranked fifth suddenly disappeared on the leaderboard; it was most likely that he had lost a level after dying, too.

It could be surmised that had Sword Demon not experienced an accidental loss of level, the individuals among the Five Unyielding Experts would have probably been different as well.

There was Brother Assist, too. While this person's ability to gather information was scary, his gaming skill was pitifully average. He had a rather large information network, ranging from GMs of MMOs to the insignificant newbies on the streets.

Therefore, this individual should not be underestimated. After all, contacts were a very important resource when vying for domination in any online games.

Thousand Miles Drunk and Young Master Han were two names that allowed Youthful Reflection to breathe a sigh of relief, thinking that they were not some top-class expert with any colorful history.

However, Youthful Reflection was taken aback when Silver Moon's revealed Thousand Miles Drunk to be the infamous Fugitive 27149 of the past. Furthermore, he was the rumored Insta-kill Mage and the real powerhouse of Young Master's Elite.

As for Young Master Han, he was the leader of Young Master's Elite. With the group being named after him, the other five members were most likely just his underlings, which just made this person all the more fearsome!

Chapter 218 - Two Hundred Forty-one Letters

Four undeniably peerless experts in the online gaming community, with the additions of a Terminator-like person and a Hidden Boss... Youthful Reflection's hand trembled as he held on to the name list. Why was such a transcendent group unknown in Yunduan City? The information that Youthful Reflection had collected about the six from the Hall of Mercenaries was truly as shallow as a puddle....

These six men could not possibly have formed such a small mercenary group for no rhyme or reason. There must be some momentous goal behind it! Youthful Reflection's heart was filled with worry. Even Silver Moon who had given Youthful Reflection all this information about the six could not answer the latter's question and could only provided him two facts: The members of Young Master's Elite were the culprits behind his Past Deeds Guild's eradication in Yueye City and were the 'event organizers' of the Insta-kill Mage's 'meet and greet' yesterday.

Youthful Reflection came to a sudden realization and began to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Since he had been present in the conference at Ray's Bar, he had quite a recollection of them. Royal God Call was already someone he knew of, while Young Master Han's visage made him stand out from the crowd. Since Brother Assist was in charge of the event and a renowned figure, Youthful Reflection had naturally thrown him a few sideway glances as well. War Without Wounds was dressed very bizarrely that day, but everyone had shifted their focus on to Drifting once he turned up to the conference.

Youthful Reflection carefully recollected yesterday's event in hopes of finding some clues on how to deal with Young Master's Elite from it. It was at this point that Silver Moon provided him

with something to work on: For an unknown reason, the Insta-kill Mage, Thousand Miles Drunk, seemed to have gotten into conflict with the other five experts.

Youthful Reflection pondered on this for a while and thought that it was probable. The five were probably proud experts, so they quite resented being eclipsed by such an indomitable existence like Thousand Miles Drunk. Royal God Call's bratty attitude that day was enough proof of this. The five were most likely jealous of Thousand Miles Drunk's fighting prowess that they ended up ostracizing him. This would explain why he appeared to be so disagreeable with them that day that he even strove to ruin the entire event with his antics.

I might be able to use this to our group's advantage! Youthful Reflection excitedly thought to himself, unaware that the information Silver Moon had provided him was inaccurate.

Besides the names of Young Master's Elite's members, what else did Silver Moon know about them? His irresponsible guess of the six's relationship and the ensuing fantasy he conjured about the group had somehow resulted into him providing misleading information about them to Youthful Reflection. Even if Young Master's Elite had internal discord, it was never due to Gu Fei's fighting prowess and was actually due to everyone having clashing personalities.

On Gu Fei's end, he was quite a modest and amiable person that had helped his fellow mercenaries a number of times in the past. Examples of the aid he had given Young Master's Elite were reclaiming Sword Demon's Frost Memories, spending time in the underground prison for Royal God Call to acquire the Windchaser's Boots, bridging a connection between War Without Wounds and the Amethyst Rebirth ladies, and so on.

As for the members of Young Master's Elite... Sword Demon had long considered Gu Fei as a comrade; Royal God Call and War Without Wounds were not shallow individuals who would get

jealous of his PvP might; Brother Assist's passion for gaming lay not in fighting and was never concerned about Gu Fei's ability; lastly, the narcissist Young Master Han viewed Gu Fei as nothing more than a muscle-head in comparison to his high intellectual capacity and actually thought of himself as the real indomitable existence in the group.

With all these being said, one could say that Youthful Reflection's deduction of the chaotic relationship between the members of Young Master's Elite was practically non-existent. However, the confidence he had in his intelligence made him conclude that his deduction was absolutely correct. Youthful Reflection then went ahead and composed a heartfelt letter of persuasion as best as he could for Thousand Miles Drunk.

He started the letter by expressing his utmost respect and admiration for Gu Fei, which he was more than capable on elaborating with lavish details given his early dealings with the latter. After the matter with No Smile, Youthful Reflection had personally led 'Traversing Four Seas' hunt for Fugitive 27149 in the past. Although he had pitifully fallen into a trap in that underground passageway in Oolong Cave back then, Youthful Reflection had phrased it in the letter as if he had been very impressed by Gu Fei's 'despicable' actions.

Using thinly veiled words, Youthful Reflection proceeded to probe about Gu Fei's situation in Young Master's Elite. He refrained from blatantly stating his intention and insinuation as he wanted Gu Fei to arrive at that conclusion himself. When he read the letter for himself, Youthful Reflection could not help but feel quite proud of his way with words.

Afterward, Youthful Reflection discussed about life and dreams and appropriately mentioned that only his large guild and mercenary group could home an existence like Gu Fei. Finally, Youthful Reflection strongly expressed his desire to personally meet Gu Fei, promising many benefits for the latter in return that

even he found convincing when he read it back to himself after.

He then sent the letter that he proudly penned via the mailbox, easing the heavy rock that was burdening his heart. Since he already did his best, he could only wait for Gu Fei's reply to his letter, hoping that he would be able to meet Gu Fei soon in order to directly convince the latter of leaving Young Master's Elite.

Without him in the group, the other five men of Young Master's Elite would still be first-rate experts. Nonetheless, they would be less worrying than before. If he managed to recruit a top expert into his guild, it would essentially be killing two birds with one stone as well.

Youthful Reflection had hatched a deeply thought about plan for this six-man mercenary group, yet he had regrettably approached the issue so erroneously from the start. How would he achieve the result he wanted? Furthermore, something he had not thought of was about to happen soon.

Gu Fei was unaware that he now had plenty of fans when he went offline yesterday, but the system's notification about him having two hundred forty-one unopened letters when he got online today made him fully aware of this. Dumbfounded, Gu Fei rushed over to the mailbox by one of the city gates.

The mailbox was filled with letters for 'Thousand Miles Drunk'. Every stack Gu Fei took out would instantly cause another stack to be generated inside the mailbox. This repeated until he finally got all two hundred forty-one letters out of the mailbox. What made him depressed, though, was that each letter would take up a whole inventory slot if he was to put it into his dimensional pocket. He simply had no way of fitting all two hundred forty-one letters in him, so he could only carry the almost half a meter stack of letters in person as he carefully made his way toward Ray's Bar.

"Oh, my god! What is that?!" Players he encountered on the streets pretty much reacted this way at the sight of him carrying

lots of letters.

“They’re letters!” He explained to these players helplessly. Gu Fei sweated profusely, yet he could not even wipe the sweat off his forehead.

“Bro, you must have not opened your mailbox since the open beta!” someone exclaimed.

“How is it possible to have so many, though?!” another expressed his disbelief.

Gu Fei’s answer nearly caused their minds to collapse, “These are just letters from these past two days.”

For someone to receive so many letters over two days, just how many friends did this person have?! As Gu Fei continued on his way to Ray’s Bar, the surrounding players gazed at him with a complicated expression on their faces. What an enviable thing it was for someone to have so many friends....

Over by Ray’s Bar, Young Master Han was currently drinking by himself in their group’s usual room. Suddenly, Ray raised the curtain with his hand to let Gu Fei through with his half a meter stack of letters. Throughout his trip to the bar, he had been inclining his head to see the road ahead.

“Two hundred forty-one letters!” Gu Fei put the stack onto the table as he announced this, scattering letters all across its surface.

“That’s a really enthusiastic response!” Young Master Han chuckled, guessing that most of these letters were the result of Gu Fei’s identity being exposed by them. All those leaders who could not add him as a friend had no choice but to resort to writing letters to contact him, after all.

The content of each letter was pretty much similar to one another. Gu Fei very quickly read through three of them and a look of disappointment could be seen on his face, “Why is it all about this matter?”

Knowing that Gu Fei was currently reading the letters, Young Master Han smiled gaily, “What else are you expecting?”

“Does no one among them feel resentful about my action yesterday and wish to fight with me?” Gu Fei replied with a question as he continued to lightly read the letters.

Young Master Han was stunned. Did this guy reveal his identity in his hopes of achieving such an outcome? How did he come up with such a thought like that?

Gu Fei was on his fifth letter when he flashed Young Master Han a mischievous smile who had been sitting there in a daze all this while and said, “Since you don’t seem to have anything on right now, help me tear through all these letters!”

Young Master Han did indeed have nothing to do at the moment, so he did not reject his request. With a swig of his liquor, he took a letter, tore it open, glanced at the content, and tossed it away. A swig, a letter, a tear, a glance, throw... He repeated this process mechanically with greater efficiency than Gu Fei.

“Hey! Be more attentive! Make sure not to miss anything,” Gu Fei was quite dissatisfied with Young Master Han’s perfunctory actions.

Following his request, Young Master Han paid more attention to the matter and gave the letters two glances before tossing them over. Finally, a certain letter that was substantially well-written compared to the others earned Young Master Han’s three glances. He even casually flipped over the envelope itself and saw the sender’s name: Youthful Reflection.

This name caused Young Master Han to pause slightly. He then decided to read the letter carefully and immediately discerned Youthful Reflection’s intention for writing the letter: He wanted Gu Fei to defect from Young Master’s Elite before the match to lower the danger in the upcoming fight.

Young Master Han tried his hardest to stifle the laughter that came to him. It seemed that his plan had actually borne fruit so splendidly that their opponents were completely stumped on how to handle them. For a one-hundred-man mercenary group to resort into using such an underhanded method against a six-man mercenary group, it was simply too comical.

Originally, Young Master Han was not treating their upcoming match seriously, but since Youthful Reflection's letter had very kindly given him a chance to gain an advantage for his group, Young Master Han resolved to not waste it. Conceiving a script in his mind, he then took out a quill and paper and tossed them over to Gu Fei.

"What are these for?" Gu Fei, who was going through the stack in hopes of encountering a letter of challenge, asked Young Master Han this after receiving the items.

"You should write a reply," Young Master Han suggested.

"Why... Why do I have to?" Gu Fei asked.

"Don't you know what courtesy is? These men politely wrote you letters, so how could you not have the decency to reply to them even once? Plus, I doubt this will end if you don't give them a proper reply," Young Master Han explained.

"Oh!" Gu Fei nodded his head in agreement to Young Master Han's explanation. Quite a few of the senders of the letters had actually repeatedly mailed him two or three letters of the same matter; evidently, they had mailed him another letter when they had not received a reply for the first letter. They were probably hoping to garner his attention by continuously pestering him.

"Reply it is, then!" Gu Fei sighed as he picked up the quill and took a sheet of paper.

"Mhm. I'll help you, too," Young Master Han took a piece of paper as well.

Gu Fei felt surprised that Young Master Han actually volunteered to help him on this matter, as the effort required to reply to all these letters was higher than just reading through them.

“What should we write? Hmm... Let’s keep it simple. A few words should do,” Young Master Han told Gu Fei.

“Yeah. I’m just gonna write: ‘I thank you for your offer, but I refuse.’” After carefully thinking it over, Gu Fei came up with this.

“Oh, that’s very good. Clear and concise,” Young Master Han nodded his head in agreement and quickly busied himself with writing a letter of response on Gu Fei’s behalf. Unbeknownst to Gu Fei, the content of the letter Young Master Han was composing vastly differed from what they had agreed on. Gu Fei was too busy on his end that he did not notice what Young Master Han was doing at all.

Chapter 219 - Thousand Miles Drunk's Reply

In actuality, only one hundred twelve individuals had mailed him the two hundred forty-one letters. This meant that each of them had sent two or three letters on average. While there were some who had only sent one letter, most had sent two or three letters over; in fact, a handful of them had mailed him four or five letters. What was regretful, though, was that none of the mails was a letter of challenge that Gu Fei had been hoping to find.

The various in-game cities were geographically divided, so Gu Fei's fame was more or less limited to just within Yunduan City. Perhaps, some people would have sent letters of challenge to Gu Fei if the title of 'the strongest across all lands' could have been claimed by defeating him. Gu Fei pondered on this as he wrote a reply to each letter, Should I try to gain the title of 'undefeated under the heavens' to attract worthy challengers and travel all over Parallel World in search of such individuals?

Through their joint effort, Gu Fei and Young Master Han managed to compose one hundred twelve letters of reply; the name of each recipient was written properly across the surface of every envelope. The two needed not write Gu Fei's IGN as the sender of the letters, as the system would help Gu Fei fill that portion up once he put the letters inside the mailbox.

"Off you go, then!" Young Master Han pushed all the letters on the table over to Gu Fei.

Gu Fei nodded his head, hugged the stack of letters, and left for the mailbox. Arriving at the mailbox by one of the city gates, Gu Fei slowly slotted each letter into the mailbox and was charged a nominal fee for each letter. While the one hundred twelve players bore the cost of their letters separately, Gu Fei now had to pay the full cost of all by himself when replying....

The system was very quick to send a mail, almost as if it was

[SMS](#). Gu Fei only closed the lid of the mailbox after putting all the letters in it for a bit, but when he opened it again in the next moment, he saw that the mailbox was already empty. All of the letters he had put inside it were already sent out.

Accomplishing this task, he looked at the time and saw that only thirty minutes were left until the start of the mercenary PvP tournament. It was at this point that he received Young Master Han's message telling him to meet everyone by the teleportation array, so Gu Fei hurriedly made his way over.

Over by Four Seas' side, Youthful Reflection was feeling restless. He had been waiting for a reply to his letter from last night until now. As time went by and he still did not get a reply, Youthful Reflection began to wonder, Just how did my beautifully crafted letter fail to sway him?

In the end, Youthful Reflection came up with this sort of reason, Perhaps, he's really strong-willed! He then decided to give up on the matter. With only thirty minutes left until the match's start and some members pestering him on the mercenary channel, he figured that it was best to focus his energy on organizing everyone and coming up with a way to fight the opponents. Youthful Reflection was glad he did not brag about his plan to his men after sending that letter last night; otherwise, he would really be shooting himself in his foot.

As he was thinking of this, the system suddenly notified him: [You have received a mail.]

Feeling slightly stunned, Youthful Reflection rushed over to the nearest mailbox by one of the city gates. He was an Archer with a full-Agility build, so he swiftly arrived at the mailbox. Heart filled with trepidation, Youthful Reflection opened the mailbox and gingerly retrieved the letter within. He felt giddy when he saw the sender's name on the envelope's surface: Thousand Miles Drunk.

Since the system generated the name itself, how else could it be

faked? Youthful Reflection sprinted toward the teleportation array while he rapidly tore off the envelope to retrieve the letter within.

If the letter had indeed been written by Gu Fei, Youthful Reflection would have experienced what it felt to descend to the depths of hell from the pearly gates of heaven with Gu Fei's "I thank you for your offer, but I refuse" reply. However, this letter was written by Young Master Han, so Youthful Reflection was abruptly sent straight up to the pearly gates of heaven – for now. The 'hell' part would definitely come later.

In this letter, Thousand Miles Drunk first voiced all the grievances he had with Young Master's Elite before wholeheartedly approving of Youthful Reflection's suggestion to defect over to his side. He then wished to show his dedication to his new mercenary group, Four Seas, by heartlessly revealing the PvP strategy for this upcoming match of his now ex-mercenary group, Young Master's Elite.

Grand Kiting strategy! Thousand Miles Drunk revealed in the letter. No one in Young Master's Elite had the guts to face the strongest mercenary group, Four Seas, head on in combat, so they decided to use the Grand Kiting strategy that they were well-versed at for this match. The best way to counter such a strategy was for Four Seas to control the number of its match participants; only Four Seas' best and elite members should participate in this upcoming PvP match because Young Master's Elite could only accumulate kill points by targeting the opposing side's weakest members.

Furthermore, Young Master's Elite would depend on its team's Mage, Thief, and Archer – three job classes with the fastest movement speed – for the Grand Kiting strategy. The other three with low Agility would often be positioned far from the actual battlefield, so if Four Seas could ambush those three, the outcome of the match would tilt in Four Seas' favor. As for how this could be done, Thousand Miles Drunk asked Youthful Reflection to think

of this himself since he was regrettably not good at coming up with any combat strategy.

Finally, Thousand Miles Drunk expressed his regret for being unable to open his friends list to accept Youthful Reflection's friend request as "There are simply too many people trying to add me these days."

A flicker of doubt passed through Youthful Reflection's mind as he read through the letter. Only half an hour was left until the match's start, so the members of Four Seas were anxiously inquiring to him about their group's strategy for this PvP. The match was about to begin, but Youthful Reflection had yet to tell them of how they would fight Young Master's Elite. Did he wish for everyone to participate in the match or just the elite members? This was a question that the whole of Yunduan City was also wondering about.

Youthful Reflection hurriedly sent out a message on the mercenary channel before rushing over to the teleportation array by the Hall of Mercenaries. When Youthful Reflection was teleported into the 'changing room', he knew exactly which plan he was going with and announced, "Not all of us are going to participate in this match to prevent us from falling for enemies' Grand Kiting strategy. Mmm... I'll call out the names of the members who will join me for this match." He then began to read out names from the members list. Out of the thirty members he was choosing for this match, he made sure to include ten Archers and ten Thieves before filling up the remaining spots with the other job classes.

Youthful Reflection had always been the commander and tactician of Traversing Four Seas Guild, so he had always had more authority than Guild Leader Oathless Sword when it came to this matter. No one objected to his decision once he announced it. The players who were not chosen for the match immediately left the 'changing room'. According to Traversing Four Seas Guild's rules,

all the players would receive recompense just by abiding to the core members' orders, so these players did not really feel saddened for not being chosen to participate in the match.

“This will do!” Youthful Reflection gazed at the thirty men before him as he thought of how to proceed.

In the ‘changing room’ of Young Master’s Elite, five men listened to Brother Assist count the number of participants of the opposing group for this match. “Hey, Four Seas initially had sixty-seven players for this match, so why are they down to only thirty men now?!” Brother Assist expressed his surprise at the final headcount of the opposing mercenary group’s match participants. “Looks like your Grand Kiting strategy is still very effective against our opponents. They are very afraid of it!” Brother Assist happily patted Young Master Han.

“He he...” Young Master Han merely chuckled.

“How are we fighting this match?” Gu Fei rubbed his fists together, the fighting spirit within him surging. Youthful Reflection would definitely be shedding bitter tears if he could see Gu Fei right now.

“It’s only thirty men! How about we just kill them all directly?” Young Master Han cheerfully fielded this idea.

“I absolutely agree!” This was Gu Fei’s favorite method, as it would let him rampage across the map and enjoy himself to the fullest! It reminded him of the times he had fought alongside Amethyst Rebirth....

“These... These thirty men that Four Seas have sent in cannot be compared to High Cloud’s. They are surely the elite within Traversing Four Seas; their teamwork won’t be lacking at the very least. Wouldn’t it be inappropriate for us to simply face them head on?” Brother Assist was worrying about his fellow mercenaries’ way of approaching a fight as usual.

“Let’s have some fun! We should also learn to enjoy this tournament from time to time. Stop fussing over the minor details,” Young Master Han said something very uncharacteristic of him.

“Are you sure?” Brother Assist glanced at Young Master Han and then over to Sword Demon. Sword Demon’s expression was as calm as ever; he was like a great oak for Young Master’s Elite, unyielding and unbending no matter what raged on around him. He never questioned anything and always exuded an aura of resolve that bolstered the confidence of the people around him. Brother Assist habitually looked over to Sword Demon to search for his own self-confidence, which he successfully managed to find this time as well.

“Let’s focus on harassing the opponents like yesterday,” Young Master Han said, adding, “But our opponent this time around will certainly not be easily thrown into chaos like how High Cloud was, so we mustn’t prod them carelessly. Everyone should consider his retreat options before attacking and must only engage the enemies when he’s absolutely certain of success. The key here is to save your strength.” As all seriously nodded their heads, he reminded them, “The match is about to begin.”

When the ten-second countdown ended, both mercenary groups were sent into the PvP arena.

“You three should go ahead and advance along the edges of the map. I’ll observe the situation from a vantage point once you have circled the enemies. Wait for my command,” Young Master Han waved his hand dismissively. Gu Fei, Sword Demon, and Royal God Call proceeded forward following his order and soon disappeared without a trace. War Without Wounds, who was standing beside Young Master Han and Brother Assist, glumly asked, “Am I in charge of protecting you guys again?”

“Let’s head to a high ground!” Young Master Han ignored his question and merely brought the two to a vantage point. The three

immediately spotted a group of people in the distance upon securing a vantage point, but they could not discern how many players there were due to them being very far away.

“How many people are there? Is that all thirty of them?” Brother Assist eyed the opposing team suspiciously. He felt that something was off with how Young Master Han had positioned their group today. Usually, they would all head to a high ground to spy on the enemies first before sending the attack squad on their way. Why did he split the group from the get-go?

“Sword Demon, slightly head toward the 328, 341 direction; Miles, move yourself toward 24, 357; and Royal, just head to your right and move—what the heck?! That’s your LEFT! Can’t you even tell left from right?!” Young Master Han adjusted the three’s routes on the mercenary channel.

“How’s everything?” Gu Fei and the two asked for information about the enemies on the mercenary channel after following Young Master Han’s directions for a while.

“There’s no movement on their end yet. Chill; we’re still testing each other’s patience,” Young Master Han replied.

“They should be able to see us over by this hilltop, so why are they not making a move?” Brother Assist voiced his suspicion.

“Perhaps, they have already sent a team over to ambush us,” Young Master Han explained unhurriedly. Just as he said this, several arrows could be heard flying toward their flank.

“That was quick!” Young Master Han laughed mirthlessly as he released the Heal he had prepared in advance. Although the enemy Archers used the same skill, due to their individual equipment and stats, they had different range and attack speed, and this caused their arrows to fly toward the three at different speed. Young Master Han accurately grasped the timing and heading direction of these arrows and swiftly bestowed Heal on War Without Wounds.

The arrows were indeed aimed at War Without Wounds. Fortunately, War Without Wounds' new high defense armor and Young Master Han's superbly timed Heal prevented the Archers from insta-killing him.

War Without Wounds was an experienced combatant, so he reacted swiftly to this surprise attack. Advancing a few steps forward, he unleashed Cyclone with his two claymores.

As expected, the Archers were not the only ones trying to kill him off; Thieves were also trying to stab him sneakily from behind. The Cyclone he had unleashed insta-killed these two Thieves on Stealth.

"D*mm*t! Things are looking dire!" When War Without Wounds saw five Archers sending arrows their way, he immediately assumed that the number of Thieves would be just as much – if not more – but, so far, he had only found and killed off two Thieves.

Youthful Reflection, who had personally led this team over to conduct the ambush, was currently quietly giggling to himself. Their three targets seemed to be utterly unprepared for this sudden turn of events, which finally led him to trust Thousand Miles Drunk's words in the letter.

Two points were mentioned in the letter: first was for Youthful Reflection to only send out elite members for this PvP match and second was for him to ambush the three slower members of Young Master's Elite who would not be directly participating in the fight.

While Youthful Reflection had misgivings about the letter's content, the first point was something he would still do. This was because anyone could easily find out the amount of players participating in the match through the system. If he had ignored Thousand Miles Drunk's first suggestion, the latter would have received the message that he was deemed 'untrustworthy' by him. In the off chance that the letter's content was actually true, Youthful Reflection's disregard of the first point would simply

result in his brilliant plan backfiring before it could even be enacted.

Luckily, a second suggestion was given in the letter, which thus allowed Youthful Reflection to test the validity of Thousand Miles Drunk's statement. If the letter was fake, then the opponent would surely use this particular point to set a trap and lure them into an ambush.

With Youthful Reflection's successful ambush of the three targets and the three's cluelessness about the entire situation, he could finally say with surety that Thousand Miles Drunk had been honest. That Priest being able to easily determine the focus of their surprise attack was just a testament to how skilled he was, as his superbly timed Heal at the start of their attacks also effectively saved the Warrior's life.

Given War Without Wounds' vast gaming experience, it was also not surprising for him to be able to deduce that Thieves would be attacking him and to successfully kill off two of them with his Cyclone.

Despite all these setbacks, the skirmish was still tipped toward Four Seas' favor.

War Without Wounds turned his head around after killing the two Thieves, only to discover that Young Master Han had already been surrounded by three Thieves! Furthermore, the Archers had fired off a second volley of arrows toward him.

Young Master Han had never put points to his character's Endurance stat, so his inherent HP was relatively low. He simply had no means to save himself from such a concentrated attack no matter how skilled he really was and turned into a beam of white light in a matter of seconds.

War Without Wounds let out a furious bellow as he aimed his Charge toward the Thieves. War Without Wounds knocked a Thief into a Dizzy state as he cut the hapless sap down with a few broad

strokes of his claymores. Meanwhile, the other two Thieves used this opportunity to get away from him. This was when an innumerable amount of arrows came flying straight to him. Without a Priest's Heal, what would that bit of stat from Brother Assist's blessing even do for him to survive this? It was under this concerted assault of all the speed-based job classes that War Without Wounds had finally been sent out of the map. As for Brother Assist... He was also taken out unceremoniously by the enemies.

With this successful ambush, Youthful Reflection sighed in relief as a delighted smile formed on his lips. It was at this point that he spoke the line that Young Master Han had been waiting for. It was a command that would ultimately affect the outcome of this match. "Don't bother with the enemies' Mage; I've already turned him over to our side!"

Stands for Short Message Service. It is technically for sending instant messages via a mobile provider that constitutes about one hundred sixty characters.

Chapter 220 - Young Master Han's Orchestration

Gu Fei, Sword Demon, and Royal God Call expressed their shock on the mercenary channel when Young Master Han, War Without Wounds, and Brother Assist were killed off by the enemies. Their swift exit made the three of them wonder what had happened. They eventually got their reply from the three who were now outside the PvP arena.

“This is so depressing! We were ambushed!” War Without Wounds said.

“Good luck, you three!” Young Master Han said calmly. Based on his calculations, Youthful Reflection would attempt to tighten the bond between him and Gu Fei now that the latter had earned his utmost trust. He he... Trying to get chummy with Miles will only hasten your fall from the peak of heaven to the depths of hell.

“How are we going to fight this match now?” Royal God Call asked.

“Same as yesterday; Royal will draw a portion of the enemies' firepower from afar, Sword Demon will attempt to close in on the enemies with his Stealth, and Miles will use the opportunity created to rush them.” Young Master Han designated the three's roles as he savored the impending disaster that was about to consume Four Seas mercenary group.

The three stuck to the routes Young Master Han had given them before. Coming from three different directions, the three somehow managed to arrive at where the twenty men of Four Seas were situated without encountering any enemy ambushers. Royal God Call was atop a small hill, Sword Demon was behind a land depression, and Gu Fei was hiding in a nearby copse of trees.

“Shall I start the fight?” Royal God Call checked in with the other

two men.

“Begin!” Sword Demon and Gu Fei answered in unison.

An arrow on Snipe streaked out from a certain hilltop.

Although the Four Seas’ members were considered to be elites, they were not the *crème de la crème* like Royal God Call. Furthermore, he was pretty well-acquainted with this lot and was well-aware of which player had lower and higher HP and defense. He picked the target he had the most faith in taking down and lucked out when the arrow on Snipe he had sent out triggered the Fatal Blow effect, insta-killing the target. This was what it truly meant to know a foe as well as one’s self.

These Four Seas’ men were immediately thrown into a mess by this kill; they were also aware that the Archer targeting them right now was Royal God Call. Just like how Royal God Call knew almost everything about them, they too had a good grasp of Royal God Call’s stat point allocation and equipment. Unfortunately, they had not been privy of Royal God Call’s equipment acquisition, so this one insta-kill had left them stunned.

“What’s going on?” Receiving the system notification about a member’s death, Youthful Reflection very quickly questioned the others. He was currently bringing the ambush team back to congregate with the main body after taking down the three low Agility members of Young Master’s Elite.

“Royal managed to insta-kill one of us with Snipe!” someone answered.

“How’s that possible?!” Youthful Reflection was also stunned. After he had learned that Royal God Call was a member of Young Master’s Elite, he had specially reviewed the brat’s combat strength; while his skill was decent, his Attack Power was not at such a high level!

Royal God Call fired off several more arrows in the time that they

were reeling in shock. Unfortunately, besides Snipe, none of his attacks could inflict enough damage to insta-kill others. The Four Seas' players were not as disorganized as High Cloud's, and they swiftly moved to counter Royal God Call's attacks – the Priest prepared to bestow Heal on his teammates, the Archers returned fire, and the Thieves entered Stealth to sneak up on Royal God Call from behind.

Royal God Call was an experienced combatant; using Eagle Eyes, he easily counted the number of players before him and when he realized that the nineteen players had turned into seventeen, he began to employ guerilla tactics on them. Despite not knowing when the two Thieves had disappeared from the enemies' ranks, he was certain that their purpose for leaving was to assassinate him. Changing his position with every arrow he fired made it difficult for any of the two Thieves to get close to him. Since they were in a match, the restriction on time that had been placed on Stealth meant that the Thieves would forcefully be revealed after a short while.

As Royal God Call diverted the enemies' attention to him, Sword Demon began to close in on the enemies under Stealth. Royal God Call's previous attacks were a sort of signal for Sword Demon to begin his assault; concentrating his barrage of arrows on a certain person, Royal God Call somehow 'mistakenly' shot the player next to his target. The Four Seas' Priest was focusing his efforts on Royal God Call's main target, so the latter's 'misfire' barely registered to him.

Sword Demon, who was now beside this 'mistakenly targeted' person, revealed himself with a swift stab. Sword Demon's Backstab was executed after a brief pause. This delay in his attack was done to signal Royal God Call. When Royal God Call saw Sword Demon appear, he immediately fired off another arrow to the 'mistakenly shot' person, perfectly coordinating his attack with the briefly delayed Backstab in a way that the dagger and the

arrow hit the person simultaneously. The Priest was evidently not skilled enough to grasp the split-second difference between the enemies' attacks, so the man was killed off before his Heal could descend on him.

Sword Demon retreated after that one blow by activating Fleetfoot, and he quickly weaved through the enemies that had begun to surround him. The Four Seas' Archers rushed to fire a few arrows at him, yet the seasoned combatant Sword Demon already changed his path of retreat to the other side of their formation. When the Archers changed their target from Royal God Call to Sword Demon, their arrowheads somehow ended up pointing right at their comrades' butts. In the time they took to adjust their positions to gain a clear view of the target, Sword Demon had managed to arrive at a nearby copse of trees that Gu Fei had just emerged from.

Gu Fei and Sword Demon were surprised to see each other like this.

Gu Fei immediately sprinted out of the tree lines when he saw Sword Demon retreat. What he did not expect was for Sword Demon to actually retreat in the same direction he would come from. As a result, Gu Fei's advance got exposed to the enemies earlier than planned.

As for Sword Demon, he never imagined that Gu Fei would actually be in this copse of trees. Gu Fei should not even be in this location based on the last coordinates Young Master Han had given them on the mercenary channel. Otherwise, he would not have exposed Gu Fei's position like this.

What Sword Demon did not know was that Gu Fei had privately received another message from Young Master Han.

Young Master Han was very familiar with Sword Demon's combat style. Once he designated Sword Demon his coordinates and determined the enemies' PvP formation, Young Master Han

could easily predict Sword Demon's preferred escape route. Thus, he secretly instructed Gu Fei to take this very same path to create such a situation where they would be facing each other like this.

If everything had happened according to his calculations, Youthful Reflection would have undoubtedly told his men to ignore the Mage. Still, the men of Four Seas would certainly realize that something was amiss if they saw Gu Fei charge toward them with a drawn sword while emitting palpable killing intent.

With a scene where Gu Fei was charging toward the crowd just as Sword Demon was retreating, it would appear as if he was intending to charge at Sword Demon, instead.

Since Youthful Reflection told them that Gu Fei had already defected over to Four Seas, the men fully assumed Gu Fei had come out to assist them in taking down Sword Demon.

Hence, the Archers, Mages, and other ranged job classes that had enough time to injure these two targets happily stopped their attacks. They were hoping to see a scene where their enemies would turn their weapons on each other as well as to learn which between the newly minted gaming expert and the renowned maestro Sword Demon was stronger.

No attacks came for Gu Fei and Sword Demon from the enemies. The two were very baffled by this, but neither of them chose to dwell on it too much and merely continued on their paths, very quickly passing each other.

Gu Fei did not attack Sword Demon and merely continued charging toward the Four Seas' men with his sword raised instead. This was when these men of Four Seas realized that something was awry.

This realization came too late, though; Gu Fei had already blinked himself in the middle of their formation.

Gu Fei was naturally prepared when he charged toward them.

Even if both sides were in a situation where they would have to clash abruptly, as a kung fu practitioner, Gu Fei could react to the situation many times faster than others.

“Twin Incineration! Incinerate!” Gu Fei bellowed and swung the sword in his hand in a three-hundred-sixty-degree arc. This sword slash strongly resembled a flaming dragon as it flowed through the crowd and completed a full revolution around Gu Fei, killed off six of the surrounding men in one fell swoop.

Gu Fei’s purple sword created blurred afterimage as he swiftly wielded it in all directions with the Gu Family’s sword style, Zhao San Mu Si. Many of the surrounding people were struck by his sword, yet none of them could fathom how they were hit by it. Fortunately for these men, the damage inflicted on them by the sword was not high.

When it came to a group PvP, Gu Fei never sought to coordinate his attack with others – an aspect that he was inferior to when compared to experts like Sword Demon and Royal God Call.

Nonetheless, Gu Fei’s domineering strength made up for this as it let him break any opponents’ formation in one blitz. Every strike he made had the possibility of insta-killing or crushing others. Moreover, he had the ability to severely affect an opponent’s mental state, or in gaming terms, he was capable of applying the Petrify status effect on others.

This squad of almost twenty elite players completely fell into the trap that Young Master Han had set via the use of Gu Fei’s abilities. Taking into account the deaths they had incurred from Gu Fei’s Twin Incineration as well as Royal God Call and Sword Demon’s joint attacks, Four Seas had actually lost a total of eight men.

Royal God Call took the chance the chaotic situation had provided him to send an arrow on Snipe to an enemy, adding another kill point to his tally. Meanwhile, Sword Demon stealthily approached the enemies’ ranks once more. The remaining eleven

men of Four Seas suffered from attacks in and out and could momentarily not decide which enemy they should deal with first. Gu Fei wildly slashed his sword from within their ranks as he shouted the incantation for Twin Incineration whenever he could.

The enemies were scared witless when they realized that they could not dodge Gu Fei's sword strikes, and none of them dared to take him on. Twin Incineration was actually still on cool-down, so Gu Fei's chanting could not generate it, but because Gu Fei had fast fighting tempo and had worn items that increased the proc rate of additional fire attack, his sword would incessantly blaze. The fiery glow of the additional fire attack and Twin Incineration looked somewhat similar, so none of the enemies could quickly differentiate the two. They only knew that Gu Fei's Twin Incineration had insta-killed six men, so they all scrambled to get away from him.

The three members of Young Master's Elite seized this chance to massacre their fleeing enemies until only two enemy Thieves remained of the original twenty-man team. The two Thieves had fast movement speed, so they were able to escape with their lives by activating Fleetfoot.

Royal God Call rendezvoused with Sword Demon and Gu Fei. They had fun tearing the twenty enemies apart, yet the simplicity of achieving such a feat left them confused. Four Seas mercenary group should be capable of superb coordination like a well oiled machine, so how was it possible for them to easily be taken apart like this?

How would these three men react if they knew that this incredible feat had only been possible due to Young Master Han's orchestration?

Chapter 221 - The Incriminating Evidence Gone

Gu Fei was capable of insta-killing his foes with fast and unpredictable attacks. It was so fast that in the time Youthful Reflection received the notification of his men's deaths, sent out an inquiry, and received his reply, only two Thieves were alive of the twenty-man squad.

Those Four Seas' members that had been sent out of the PvP arena bemoaned on the mercenary channel about their senseless deaths at the hands of the vicious Gu Fei. With how merciless he had been to them, had Youthful Reflection really convinced him to defect into their group or had he riled him up instead? This was the question brewing in everyone's mind.

Youthful Reflection felt very pissed when he learned of this. He no longer entertained the thought of having Gu Fei into his mercenary group since it was evident that he had been tricked. It was fine for Gu Fei to not reciprocate his feelings, but for him to actually take advantage of his offer to pull a fast one on him... Youthful Reflection regarded such people with utter contempt.

He quickly did a clear account of the current situation when his anger cooled off. In terms of points, Four Seas was at a disadvantage with a score of 3 against 21. Four Seas only had five Archers and four Thieves, while Young Master's Elite had a Mage, an Archer, and a Thief.

In terms of speed, the remaining nine members of Four Seas were not at a disadvantage. The players Youthful Reflection had picked for the ambush team were the faster members among the thirty players, and those two Thieves that had successfully escaped from the three enemy players before were not any slower. Grand Kiting strategy? Youthful Reflection was not afraid of that. When it came to movement speed, the nine of them would not struggle to pit

themselves against the three enemies.

What he was really afraid of was clashing with the three enemies head on. After all, they were now aware of Royal God Call's high Attack Power, Gu Fei's merciless slaying capability, and Sword Demon's excellent diversionary tactics and team play. Just how should we deal with them? Youthful Reflection pondered on this as he looked at the eight players before him.

On Gu Fei, Royal God Call, and Sword Demon's end, the three were mainly eating food to recover HP and mana as they consolidated the matter of killing eighteen men together. No matter how skilled a player was, participating in that sort of skirmish without getting injured was impossible. When there was no alternative left, taking some damage in exchange for the enemies' lives was already a reflection of a player's exceptional judgment. And yet, Gu Fei did not even drop a bit of his HP in that fight moments ago, which rendered Sword Demon and Royal God Call in awe.

"There are still nine players left on their side." The three took the time that they were eating bread and fruit to discuss their next PvP step.

"Youthful Reflection has yet to make an appearance!" Royal God Call suddenly remarked.

"How strong is he?" Sword Demon asked.

"I haven't seen him in action, but he's someone with many wacky ideas, so he's probably the sort that speaks more than he acts," Royal God Call replied.

"It's just nine players. Let's just surround them once more and be done with it," Gu Fei suggested.

Sword Demon and Royal God Call nodded their heads in agreement. Since they did not know that Young Master Han's machination was what had allowed them to easily eliminate those

eighteen men in one go earlier, it was only natural for the three to think that taking down the last nine players would be a simple task. Royal God Call even thought that he could kill them all by himself upon realizing that the opposing team no longer had a Priest with them.

“So how’s your mana/HP recovery?” the three men asked one another, only heading out after ensuring that everyone was in top condition.

High ground! These three decided to find the enemies’ location first.

A hillock was not too far from them, and as the three proceeded toward it, they caught sight of human activity from atop the hill; obviously, this meant that there were already people occupying the hillock.

It was no surprise for their opponents to also head over to a high ground as they were probably searching for the three of them as well. The three exchanged looks and immediately split up to do their thing.

The enemies disappeared from the hilltop, so Royal God Call sprinted over to the back of it. The long-range advantage he possessed let him launch an attack from halfway up the sloping land mass.

Sword Demon and Gu Fei advanced to the left and right respectively while they took note of boulders and such that could provide them cover and prevent the enemy Archers from having a line of fire of them. Just as they were almost at the hillock, they heard Royal God Call curse loudly, “F*CK ME!”

A system notification sounded following this one shout; Royal God Call was eliminated from the match.

“We’ve been tricked!” Royal God Call fumed on the mercenary channel, “There is an ambush ready at the back of the hillock, so

be careful, you two!”

“Alright... We’ll attack from the front, then!” Gu Fei laughed. He did not think much of Royal God Call’s sacrifice. Just like how Royal God Call had thought that he could shoot all nine men by himself, Gu Fei had also surmised that killing the remaining players was within his capacity. In fact, it would not matter even if Sword Demon was killed off as well.

At the thought of Sword Demon, Gu Fei looked to the side and saw him activating his Stealth. Gu Fei did not know where Sword Demon went after that, since the latter’s attention was currently not on him.

This was how a little misunderstanding occurred between them; Sword Demon thought Stealth was useless on Gu Fei, and that the latter would be able to see his movement and match his speed accordingly. Unfortunately for him, Gu Fei was clueless about all this and merely continued to rush forward at his top speed.

A Thief’s speed would be reduced significantly while on Stealth, so Sword Demon had no means to catch up to Gu Fei at all. Unwilling to cancel Stealth, he asked loudly instead, “Hey! What are you going so fast for?”

By the time his shout reached Gu Fei’s ears, the latter had already mumbled, “Translocation! Blink!”

Just as he turned around in reaction to Sword Demon’s shout, he was teleported atop the hillock.

A gentle breeze rolled on the hilltop. Gu Fei could only roughly judge Sword Demon’s position. He did not have the time to carefully search for the other as someone in front of him was already fixating his eyes on him.

Youthful Reflection was staring at Gu Fei as if he strongly wished to ask him something.

The two were no more than five meters apart. With a bow in his

left hand, Youthful Reflection suddenly put his right hand into his dimensional pocket....

It's coming! Gu Fei cried out in his mind. His Blink was still on cool-down, so Gu Fei could only close in on the enemy with his fastest speed. Running diagonally across Youthful Reflection, Gu Fei kept his body low on the ground to better dodge the attack that could be coming at any time.

Gu Fei reached Youthful Reflection's side in a few steps. Without straightening up his body, Gu Fei made an oblique cut from the bottom right to the top left with his sword as he yelled, "Twin Incineration! Incinerate!"

Youthful Reflection, who had taken something out of his pocket, waved it at Gu Fei and asked, "What are you—"

Gu Fei did not get to hear what he was about to say as his hand moved faster than a person's speech. The purple blade's fiery glow created an afterimage as it killed off Youthful Reflection who had a surprised expression on his face.

Youthful Reflection was still in that odd pose when he appeared at the square by the Hall of Mercenaries. No matter how anyone looked at it, his posture did not resemble a person who was about to attack. His right hand was held in a position where his thumb, middle finger, and forefinger were pressing against one another, yet there was nothing between them at all.

"Where's the letter?! Where has it gone to?!" Youthful Reflection returned to his senses when he saw nothing between his fingers. He searched his dimensional pocket and looked around him, yet the letter was nowhere to be found. That was the incriminating evidence that would expose Gu Fei's lack of character. Youthful Reflection had already thought this whole thing through; no matter how the match went, he was not going to let go of this matter with Gu Fei. While it was indeed quite dishonorable of him to attempt to poach someone from another group, this was

something almost every guild leader was also doing, so everyone more or less accepted it as the norm.

However, Gu Fei's action was just too despicable. It would have been fine if he had rejected the offer. For Gu Fei to actually make use of it to scheme against him, Youthful Reflection believed that if the letter was made public, Gu Fei would no longer be seen by others as someone worthy of attracting. He only needed to give this matter a little nudge, and it would most likely tip over into a situation where Gu Fei would become public enemy number one for his vile conduct. No matter how strong he was, he would surely be unable to fight against all the guilds in Yunduan City.

Youthful Reflection was proud of himself for coming up with such a step. He took out that letter to tell Gu Fei of his plan and to see in person if Gu Fei would be remorseful of his actions or be embarrassed at being thoroughly exposed.

Unexpectedly, the shameless Gu Fei had not even shown a hint of contrition and had actually taken that opportunity to attack him, instead.

At this moment, Youthful Reflection resolved to exact revenge on Gu Fei, yet he could not find Thousand Miles Drunk's letter of reply, which was the key item for his revenge.

Where was the letter? That letter was actually still in the PvP arena, except that it had already been burned into ash and scattered by the wind. Facing Twin Incineration that could even insta-kill players, what else could that letter turn into but a pile of ash?

Gu Fei was feeling a little sad, too. His fast attack execution had prevented him from getting a good look of the item Youthful Reflection had been waving in his hand just then. He thought that it was a weapon of sort. But why did it turn into ash? Gu Fei grabbed bits of the scattering ashes and inspected them. Was it a powerful magic scroll? As Gu Fei was thinking of this, the sound of

the familiar twang of bowstrings clued him in to the fact that a number of arrows had been fired off toward him.

This was Youthful Reflection's original plan. While he distracted Gu Fei, the other Archers would concentrate their firepower to assassinate the latter. None had expected for Youthful Reflection to be swiftly struck down by Gu Fei upon his arrival on the hilltop, however. The remaining players did not know what to do at this point, so when they saw Gu Fei's dazed expression, they immediately fired off arrows on Homing Projectile at him.

Since their Snipe was on cool-down after using it to dispose of Royal God Call moments ago, these Archers opted to use the Homing Projectile skill to attack Gu Fei.

Sadly, this skill was just too slow when used against Gu Fei. Extending his arm out and shaking his wrist lightly, he swatted down the four arrows on Homing Projectile heading his way. Gu Fei's sword did not stop there. He abruptly turned around with his sword held aloft and stabbed four times, revealing the four menacing Thieves behind him.

Twin Incineration's cool-down time ended just now. Gu Fei gauged the position of the four Thieves and then flicked his sword out to vanquish three of them right there and then. The final Thief lost his will to fight and turned tail. Gu Fei hurriedly chased after the lone Thief, yet he did not rush to attack him.

Those four Archers who were watching this scene felt like crying yet no tears would come out of their eyes.

With how Gu Fei was sticking to the Thief, even if they wanted to fire at him, their line of sight was perfectly blocked off by their fleeing comrade.

Chapter 222 - Silently Suffer the Loss Again

Gu Fei determinedly rushed down the hill as he nimbly dodged the four Archers' hail of arrows. Seeing that Gu Fei was almost upon them, the Archers stopped their attacks and hurriedly fled in terror instead.

Since the Archers had fast movement speed as well, Gu Fei was unable to catch up to any of them, especially when one of them would flee and the other three would continue to shoot arrows at him. Young Master's Elite's Grand Kiting strategy had one man running while all the enemies chased after him; in this case, it was Gu Fei who was the one being kited by the four Archers. It was under such condition that the PvP between both sides reached an impasse.

The four Archers happily praised Youthful Reflection for eventually making the right choice. By utilizing their speed, the Mage no longer posed a big threat; if they carried on fighting in this manner, the Mage would most likely be the one facing death.

Gu Fei continued to chase after the enemies, yet he could just not catch up to any of them no matter what. Eventually, the four Archers that kept on harassing Gu Fei from four different directions slowly became complacent, completely forgetting that Gu Fei had the Blink skill.

Blink's cool-down time was one minute and it was already up. Gu Fei refrained from using it even now because he could not find a good opportunity to do so. He could only teleport himself for five meters, so he needed to narrow the distance between him and one of the four Archers for his skill to work.

Gu Fei persisted for quite some time until he finally found a chance to do it. He darted straight toward a particular Archer even as the other three peppered him with arrows, each of them feeling dissatisfied that none of their arrows had managed to hit Gu Fei so

far. It was common knowledge that an Archer had a higher chance of hitting a moving target if he or she was closer to the person, so the three Archers impatiently tried to narrow the distance between them and Gu Fei.

The three men did not know that Gu Fei was keeping his attention on them, and once the latter saw an opportunity, he quickly pivoted and teleported himself before an Archer.

He did not have enough mana to cast Twin Incineration, so Gu Fei could only slash the man with his sword repeatedly.

Gu Fei sincerely praised Fleeting Smile for his recommendation. While he would have possessed the skill to slow down his enemies if he had chosen to advance into a Water Mage, he would have still lacked the speed to get near them. How would his spell slow the enemies down if it could not even hit them in the first place? When it came to fighting, it was still better to improve one's skills rather than to think of ways to reduce the opponent's skills. As a kung fu practitioner, how could he have allowed himself to be tempted by that superficial benefit and ignored this basic principle he had grown up knowing?

Gu Fei shook his head as he reflected on this. He continued to torment the Archer with his sword. It was a wonder what Fleeting Smile would say if he saw this fighting scene of Gu Fei.

With the death of the Archer Gu Fei had targeted, the other three Archers lost their elation. They finally realized that Gu Fei was an existence that transcended common sense which they had no way of dealing. Gu Fei would teleport himself over and slay them if they were near, and he would casually evade all their ranged attacks if they were far.

The three Archers kept their distance from Gu Fei and did not think of attacking him again. The three would even flee in a hurry when Gu Fei moved slightly.

Gu Fei decided to eat a piece of fruit to recover his mana, but

even then, the Archers merely stared at him from afar. No one knew where that other Thief from before was at the moment. As he was wondering about Sword Demon's whereabouts in the map, Gu Fei received his message: "I'm here!"

Gu Fei could not find Sword Demon ever since the latter had activated his Stealth before. The skill's duration should have ended by now. In fact, the Stealth's cool-down time should also be over and Sword Demon could activate it once more. Since none of the Four Seas players dared to get near Gu Fei, Sword Demon could only creep his way over to them.

Gu Fei waited for Sword Demon to make his move, yet his wait was unexpectedly cut short by the system's announcement of Young Master's Elite winning this round of the mercenary PvP tournament!

The three Archers and Thief truly lost their desire to continue this fight and a simple discussion on the Four Seas' mercenary channel with their comrades led them to withdraw from the match. Sword Demon, who was about to launch his attack on the three Archers, was left feeling disappointed by this turn of events. Shrugging his shoulders toward Gu Fei, he deactivated his Stealth.

The system quickly reported the final score for this match and Gu Fei and Sword Demon were sent out of the PvP arena immediately after.

Upon his reappearance to the square outside the Hall of Mercenaries, Gu Fei immediately felt palpable killing intent being directed toward him. He quickly looked around and saw that the Four Seas' members were looking at him with hate-filled eyes. All of Four Seas were hatefully glaring at Gu Fei, ranging from the ones who had participated in the match, which included group leader Youthful Reflection, to the rest who had not participated in it.

Gu Fei felt perplexed by this. He had fought many matches in this

PvP tournament, and most of his opponents had been gracious losers and had even politely come to him to exchange a few friendly words after the matches. The only other exception was Cloud Herder mercenary group that had fallen victim to Young Master's Elite's Grand Kiting strategy. It was completely understandable for that mercenary group to feel dissatisfied of Gu Fei and his friends back then. As for Four Seas, what reason did its players have to resent him more extremely than Cloud Herder?

Gu Fei swept his gaze over and did not see Young Master Han and the others. Everyone in Young Master's Elite did not have the habit of waiting for the others who were still in the match after getting killed. Waiting for the others was completely up to each of them. Those who wanted would wait, while those who did not would leave.

"This doesn't look good," Gu Fei said to Sword Demon, who was standing beside him.

Sword Demon nodded his head as he slowly disappeared right before Gu Fei's eyes. HP, Attack Power, skill cool-down, and such would all reset once players left the PvP arena. Sword Demon did not hesitate and used his Stealth, as even he could sense that the situation was off.

"Seriously?!" Gu Fei sent Sword Demon this message.

"Leave first; I'll help you block them from behind!" Sword Demon replied.

"Ha ha! At least, you have the mind to help. Anyway, you leave first. Don't worry about this." Gu Fei did not plan to leave. He was always looking for a chance to PvP even if the opponents were difficult to deal with, after all.

Gu Fei could not sense Sword Demon's attention, so he did not know if the latter really left. As for Four Seas, its members glared at him for quite some time before leaving altogether.

“Why are we not taking down that bozo?!” someone indignantly asked Youthful Reflection. Youthful Reflection had not been able to locate that incriminating letter after getting sent out of the PvP arena. Truly, he was just like Xianglin Sao¹ and caused the other ninety-nine members of his mercenary group to fall for Gu Fei’s vile actions. This matter had now reached the ears of Oathless Sword and Gale Force, the two other core members of Traversing Four Seas.

There was already bad blood between Gu Fei’s 27149 persona and Traversing Four Seas. Back then, the guild had lost considerable face with that ‘No Smile’ business. Although Traversing Four Seas had eventually emerged as Yunduan City’s number one guild, top brasses like Oathless Sword and Gale Force had always felt that that incident had tarnished the guild’s image. Without that incident, there would not be a dispute regarding who was the number one guild between Traversing Four Seas and Carouse.

However, when all was said and done, it was entirely the result of No Smile’s despicable actions. Even if the players of Traversing Four Seas wished to take revenge, they simply did not have the face to dig up old issues like that.

They could only silently suffer this disastrous loss at that person’s hands once more. Attempting to poach the opposing group’s member was already an unsavory move. Although their attempt was used to strike back against them, they could at most criticize Gu Fei for being even more despicable. This matter might resonate well with the other leaders who enjoyed poaching players, but announcing this publicly would be shaky at best. Everyone would definitely mock them, “Traversing Four Seas is really distasteful for trying to poach other people’s teammates. Serves them right to meet a more unscrupulous person who managed to turn the tables on them....”

Revealing the matter to the public would only make Gu Fei seem like an anti-hero of sorts for countering their plan with his ploy –

for fighting fire with fire.

As leaders of a large guild, they must always consider the bigger picture whenever they handled problems and not rashly decide about matters. Youthful Reflection hated Gu Fei so much, but he could only grit his teeth at the moment as he told his men, “Let’s disperse. We’ll discuss this matter later.”

How would they discuss this matter, though?

During the guild match, the three core members of Traversing Four Seas got together and quietly discussed the issue.

“That guy is actually a member of Amethyst Rebirth! He he!” Oathless Sword was the guild leader, yet his thoughts had always been a little off-track from the beginning. Under the withering stare of the other two, he quickly changed the subject, “Uhm... What do you two think about this?”

“Kill! Ambush! Sneak attack! Hunt!” PvP was the most straightforward solution to problems in online games; Gale Force’s thinking was as simple as that.

Youthful Reflection felt that killing Gu Fei was not enough to settle this matter. After losing that incriminating letter, he began to think of ways to use the guild member Royal God Call one way or another for this matter. It would be best if he could let Gu Fei have a taste of his medicine, yet he could not think of any way to do so and could only leave it somewhere in the back of his mind – to use whenever the chance presented itself.

“Oh...” Youthful Reflection was hoping to outsmart the opponent, while Gale Force was suggesting for a more violent approach. Both waited for Oathless Sword to make the final decision. Oathless Sword pondered on this for a long time before saying, “Let’s go with Youthful Reflection’s suggestion! The members of Young Master’s Elite are experts, and we don’t know what they are planning. Let’s look for a way to strike a blow at these experts as we take care of Thousand Miles Drunk, killing two

birds with one stone.”

Youthful Reflection was naturally 100% in agreement with this decision, while Gale Force reluctantly clenched his fists and chose not to comment.

Their current guild match was the least challenging of all their guild matches, so it would hardly affect Traversing Four Seas from clinching victory whether the three core members participated in the fight or not. Predictably, the opponents were completely eradicated across the whole PvP arena within half an hour.

Gu Fei had nothing to do during the guild versus guild tournament. Doing ‘Bounty Mission’ was no longer fun for him since he only felt that he was killing noobs, so he decided to grind his level on monsters in the wilderness. When the system notified Gu Fei of receiving a letter, he barely took note of it and merely continued to joyfully use kung fu to kill the surrounding monsters in this particular grinding map.

Entering the city to log off, he casually retrieved the letter in the mailbox in one of the city gates. He then looked at the letter’s envelope and saw these words on its surface: LETTER OF CHALLENGE!

“F*ck me!” Gu Fei could feel his blood pumping from excitement.

Chapter 223 - The Overly Focused Speech

Reading Expert

Gu Fei's heart was filled with elation when he actually received a letter of challenge that he had been dreaming of.

After admiring the words printed in large font on the envelope's surface for quite some time, Gu Fei quickly checked the sender's name: Gale Force. With that, he hurriedly tore the envelope open and fished out the letter within. The content of the letter was brief: "Do you dare to have a duel with me?"

Gu Fei's blood surged. He immediately toggled the permission setting for his friends list and added Gale Force as a friend, yet he received the notification that the person was not accepting any friend at the moment. Who knew how much blood those leaders would cough up if they found out that there was such a simple method to add Gu Fei as a friend?

Since he could not accept the challenge via private messaging, Gu Fei hurriedly took out a blank sheet of paper and penned a short response: "Bring it!"

As soon as he dropped that letter into the mailbox, Gu Fei began to circle around it while repeating this mantra, "Reply quickly! Reply quickly!"

After circling the mailbox for several minutes, a ding rang out and Gu Fei shoved his hand into the mailbox without reading the message that came with the system notification. It was indeed Gale Force's reply: "Time and place!"

"Now! You can choose the location!" Gu Fei hurriedly sent out this reply. It was only fair for both players to choose the time and place respectively, and Gu Fei had always acted according to this basic rule.

"Martial Field!" Gale Force was also standing beside the mailbox

on his end, so his reply was just as quick. After replying to Gu Fei's message, Gale Force impatiently waited for the latter's response.

He was not disappointed as Gu Fei's reply arrived extremely fast: "How do I get there?"

"Go fifty meters east from the Fighters' Dojo!" Gale Force replied rather quickly, as if the two were anxious to get this over with.

"I won't leave till you arrive!" the two mutually said to each other.

Gu Fei was originally planning to log off; instead, he turned around and made his way toward the Fighters' Dojo. "I'll log off after the duel." He was rather optimistic about how things would pan out in this upcoming fight.

Meanwhile, Gale Force was on his guard against any type of trap. The rumors about this Mage had already abounded, and quite a lot of his guildmates had experienced fighting him too. The descriptions about Gu Fei were plentiful, but Gale Force was still able to catch three main points: Close Combat. Insta-kill. Blink.

Gale Force believed that these three were the most frightening aspects of this Mage.

Close combat meant his opponent was versatile in a fight; Insta-kill meant he could not afford to make a mistake; finally, Blink meant that his opponent had fast speed at his disposal. Only one conclusion could be taken by putting all these three together: The Mage could blink right beside his target and insta-kill him....

Most people would probably think of giving up once they heard the Mage's fighting style, but Gale Force was not most people. In his eyes, the Mage was just like any other that required chanting an incantation to cast a spell.

Such a weakness meant that by focusing on the Mage's lips while they were fighting, he would somewhat be able to predict what the Mage was planning to cast. Everything that happened after

learning this would depend on their reaction speed.

Many players of course knew of this logic and how to counter it, so a lot of Mages came up with a way to prevent this: They would merely murmur their spell incantations during PvP. In fact, it was almost to the point that their voices could only be heard by the system and themselves.

This method was ineffective to Gale Force, though, as he had a unique skill: He could skillfully read lips.

While the words he lip-read might not be absolutely accurate, he found it easy to tell what a Mage was chanting with the few spells Mages currently possessed. Since Gu Fei also had that Blink skill, Gale Force had to familiarize himself with how the words were pronounced to activate it. Upon confirming the incantation's content, he felt confident that he could identify it when Gu Fei would chant the spell with his lip-reading skill.

Seeing would allow him to be more assertive, while hearing would cause him to remain passive in a fight. Gale Force's method of grasping how the opposing Mage would act through his eyes gave him better chance at winning the fight than someone who was dependent on their ears. Although it would just give him a slight edge, that alone could mean the difference between life and death when experts clashed. This fact increased Gale Force's confidence to proceed with this duel. This method had been useful against Mages thus far, so he did not feel any bit of fear going into this duel.

Gale Force was not really against Oathless Sword and Youthful Reflection's decision of waiting for a chance to take down Gu Fei and the rest of the experts of Young Master's Elite; it was just that he had long wanted to beat the Mage up ever since that 'No Smile' incident. Unfortunately, the identity of the Close Combat Mage had been unknown before. While his original intention had waned over time, today's incident had caused it to flare up once more. Gale Force's desire to teach Gu Fei a lesson surged again upon

learning of the occurrence in the mercenary PvP tournament. Armed with the knowledge of Gu Fei's identity this time, Gale Force did not hesitate to send him a letter of challenge.

Martial Field was not a place with a specific use. The field was designed more for the purpose of providing a complementary backdrop for the Fighter's Dojo on its right. Naturally, such a purposeless location would not have many players around. When Gu Fei arrived, he immediately spotted a Fighter standing in the middle of the Martial Field with arms folded across his chest. Gu Fei knew without a doubt that this man was Gale Force and was thoroughly delighted.

Gu Fei did not recognize the person as one of the three core members of Traversing Four Seas, so he was not elated because of that; instead, he was happy because the opponent was a Fighter. Gu Fei tried to guess the job class of his challenger as he made his way over, and he felt that the chances of his opponent being a Mage were quite high. Because there was still job class disequilibrium in Parallel World when it came to single PvP, the fairest way to have a duel was for both parties to have the same job class. If an Archer invited a Mage to a duel, it was highly likely for no one in the game besides Gu Fei to accept the challenge.

"Ahem. Are you Gale Force?" Gu Fei climbed up the stage and greeted the other.

Gale Force nodded his head as he coldly regarded the Mage, "Thousand Miles Drunk?" While Gu Fei did not recognize him from their past exchanges, Gale Force also failed to recognize Gu Fei as the person who had whacked him with a stick before.

Gu Fei also nodded his head to confirm his identity, "Shall we begin?"

"I won't be merciful with my strikes, so you should do the same!" Gale Force's goal today was to beat Gu Fei up on the brink of death.

"That's the best!" Gu Fei also did not like fighting up until a

certain point only. This was because it was difficult to hold back, and at the same time, it prevented his opponent from displaying his full might.

The two men assumed their PvP stances once they were done talking. Gale Force stared closely at Gu Fei's lips, while Gu Fei kept his focus on the opponent's joints.

Come! the two shouted to themselves.

Translocation! Blink! Gale Force waited with bated breath for Gu Fei's lips to form these two words. The other might just say one word instead of two, but Gale Force was capable of judging the spell with just the word 'translocation'. He fully intended to not let Gu Fei have a chance to strike first. Gale Force would counterattack the first chance he got. Translocation... Blink? Oi! What are you waiting for? Just blink over to my side and attack me already, so that I can instantly move myself! Gale Force's heart was filled with glee at this prospect.

All he thought of was how to counter Gu Fei's move, so he completely forgot one simple fact: Such a move was usually only done at a critical moment!

Gu Fei mainly learned Blink to chase after faster opponents than him. Gale Force did not show any indication that he was faster than Gu Fei, nor did he reveal any intention of running away. Just from these two facts, Gale Force already failed to meet the criteria for Gu Fei to use his Blink skill. He was essentially waiting for something that would not happen.

It just so happened that Gu Fei wanted to observe Gale Force's skill first. As such, he was avidly waiting for the latter to make the first move.

One man stared unblinkingly at the other's mouth, and another looked intently at the other man's joints... The two unintentionally created a stalemate just like that as both tried to see if they could counter each other's attack.

Since neither of them made a move to attack, the two unknowingly continued the staring contest for the next five minutes.

“Why have you not attacked yet?” Gu Fei suddenly asked.

When Gu Fei uttered these words, Gale Force immediately dodged to the side while he threw a cross punch, only to stiffly stop his punch halfway and to not finish the move.

“Ah... Why have you struck already?” Gu Fei asked with an incredulous expression on his face.

Gale Force turned to face the side as his cheeks became redder than a persimmon, ready to erupt at the slightest ridiculing from the other. He had been anxiously focusing his entire being on Gu Fei’s lips to form the words for Blink that he had subconsciously conditioned himself to do this: strike once Gu Fei’s lips move.

Therefore, once Gu Fei opened his mouth, Gale Force thoughtlessly threw that punch without registering the exact words the other had uttered. He only came back to his senses when his punch had been executed halfway. This guy has only opened his mouth. He didn’t chant the incantation for Blink. I’ve been so focused.

The embarrassed Gale Force did not turn his head to face Gu Fei for the longest time. Gu Fei, for his part, had a lot of experience when it came to clashes like this, yet he simply could not fathom the purpose behind Gale Force’s punch. Seeing the person turn his face away and no longer care about his existence, Gu Fei could not help but ask, “Are we fighting or not?”

“Of course, we’re fighting! Why would we not?!” Gale Force abruptly turned to throw a fist toward Gu Fei.

Spurring Meteor... It’s still this move, huh? Gu Fei twisted his body to the side to let the punch fly by. Gale Force abruptly canceled Spurring Meteor halfway, leaped in the air, and threw

both arms toward Gu Fei to grapple him. This was a move that he was confident in, yet he failed to grasp on to anything.

Was that his Blink?! Gale Force thought to himself as he raised his head to look. He saw Gu Fei standing beside him, beaming. With a quick shove, Gu Fei caused Gale Force to lose his balance mid-air and collapse to the ground.

Gu Fei quickly sidestepped backward and sighed slightly upon seeing Gale Force remain dazedly sprawled on the ground.

Despite being a Mage, Gu Fei was still the most familiar with the Fighter job class of Parallel World. His understanding came from his research of the job class – how the skills of a Fighter could be sequenced; what sort of change-ups could be used... Gu Fei had memorized everything related to the job class. The moves that the players were discovering now were entirely within Gu Fei's knowledge of the job class. Indeed, a Fighter beating Gu Fei was difficult as he or she would actually be facing off against a real fighter!

Chapter 224 - Black clothes get dusty so easily

Gu Fei knew of many possible sequences for the Fighter's skills, yet Gale Force only used one of those sequences. The look on Gale Force's face seemed to suggest that he only knew of this combo attack and did not know of any other variations or follow-ups to it. While it might be enough to deal with any average players, it was far lacking when used against a fighting expert like Gu Fei who knew many counters for it.

As he shoved Gale Force, Gu Fei preemptively took a backstep to avoid the latter's potential leg sweep. But when he saw Gale Force remain dazedly lying on the ground, Gu Fei could not help but sigh in disappointment.

Gu Fei did not deal Gale Force any damage for him to continue lying on the ground like this, which meant that the latter had only received psychological damage from being bullied by him. Gale Force lay stunned on the ground for quite a while before doing a kip up as he stared at Gu Fei.

Once he saw Gale Force stand up, Gu Fei suddenly stretched his arms to the front while he leaned his body forward. Forming an acute angle against the ground, he used his right hand to punch Gale Force right in the chest.

Is this... Spurring Meteor?! Gale Force felt so shocked that the color drained from his face. He would have used his Spurring Meteor to counter this if this had been a conventional PvP, generating Verdict to determine whose punch was stronger. Right now, he remained rooted to the spot. This was because the Mage's execution of Spurring Meteor was definitely out of character.

It was impossible for different job classes to possess the same set of skills, be it in scrolls or in weapons. In fact, any skill would not be generated by the wrong job class.

This inexplicable occurrence caused Gale Force to momentarily forget about dealing with the attack. He only returned to his senses once Gu Fei's attack was already upon him. Gale Force was an experienced combatant, so he naturally knew of ways to deal with this incoming Spurring Meteor. Gale Force decided to take the blow head on when he realized that he could not dodge it at this point.

Gale Force lifted his fists to grab Gu Fei's shoulders just as the latter's fists struck him squarely on the chest.

This was a risky move since Spurring Meteor could inflict the Dizzy status effect, which would leave the target unable to act once the skill connected. In which case, Gale Force's counterattack would be rendered useless. An expert Fighter could easily begin a string of attacks after applying the Dizzy status effect, which was why many Fighters enjoyed starting a PvP with Spurring Meteor.

Still, at a measly 10% rate, the probability of a Fighter's Spurring Meteor afflicting the Dizzy status effect to its target was far lower than a Warrior's Charge. Skill proficiency would not significantly raise this proc chance, so Gale Force felt that this gamble was largely in his favor.

In actuality, the chances of his gamble succeeding were not just largely in his favor; it was pretty much entirely in his favor.

Where in the world would Gu Fei get the Spurring Meteor skill? He only used the same technique as Spurring Meteor to throw a punch squarely on Gale Force's chest. Hence, Gale Force's decision to not dodge his attack and to instead grab at Gu Fei's shoulders immediately made Gu Fei cry foul.

He had suffered plenty of losses in the game... Oftentimes, Gu Fei would feel exasperated at these MMO players' ability to execute a shameless combat style.

Gu Fei's punch had no damage behind it, nor could it afflict the Dizzy status effect. As such, his shoulders ended up being firmly

gripped by Gale Force. Gale Force did not think much about it and promptly shifted his arms to execute the level 30 Fighter skill, Seismic Toss.

The greatest feature of a Fighter's skill was its quick execution and short cool-down time. These two factors were also why they mostly allocated their points to Spirit. With the cool-down time of Gale Force's Seismic Toss ending, he used his arms to fling Gu Fei outward.

Seeing that Gu Fei's punch had not dealt the slightest damage on him, Gale Force immediately realized that Gu Fei's Spurring Meteor was nothing more than a mimicry of the skill.

Gale Force roared and activated his Spurring Meteor on Gu Fei. Gu Fei was hurtling in the air at the moment; under the system's strict rules, he could only watch Gale Force's fists land on his body in extreme aggravation.

Rushing the Toss! This was a simple combo that Fighters often used in the beginning of the game; at the current stage of the game, defeating their opponents with those two moves was no longer feasible. The probability of a Fighter chaining his attack after this combo depended entirely on the proccing of the Dizzy status effect via Spurring Meteor.

The skill itself only had a 10% proc rate, but Gale Force's understanding of the importance of the Dizzy status effect to a Fighter made him splurge on items that increased this chance. In the end, he managed to bring up the proc rate of his Dizzy status effect to 34%.

This was already a high proc rate for the Dizzy status effect for any Fighter, but due to him focusing his gear on this particular aspect, his overall Attack Power suffered a decline.

Had Gale Force focused on increasing his Attack Power, that Seismic Toss and Spurring Meteor of his would have sent Gu Fei right to the Mage Academy to respawn.

Gu Fei was flung outward when he received Gale Force's punch and tumbled a few times when he fell. Gale regretted using too much strength in that last punch, as there was a limit to how long the Dizzy status effect could last. Flinging Gu Fei for quite a distance effectively wasted these precious seconds and created the possibility of the Dizzy status effect to run its course by the time Gale Force reached Gu Fei's location. Right now, Gale Force's wish was to acquire a skill that would let him move from one spot to another instantly.

Gale Force quickly rushed toward Gu Fei, but in just a few steps, he saw the latter disappear from his sight. Gu Fei had tumbled outside the platform of Martial Field!

Gale Force sighed deeply. He could only submit to the fact that it would be useless even if the Dizzy status effect procced there and then, as his punch had actually brought Gu Fei right outside the platform.

But since this duel was a deathmatch, tumbling outside the platform did not mean that the outcome of the match was decided. Gale Force quickly rushed to the edge of the platform and leaped off it to smash Gu Fei down. This was a level 36 Fighter skill, Swallow Dropkick. Originally, the user was supposed to leap in the sky and extend his leg out to strike down a target, but because Swallow Dropkick was extremely difficult to chain, many clever Fighters began using the skill to stamp on a fallen enemy, instead. Over time, players in Parallel World gave it an alternate name: Swallow Smash.

Striking an opponent down to the ground after a combo, Swallow Smash could send the target right back to his or her spawn point. This was currently the favorite fighting move of Fighters. Gale Force did not actually use the skill to look cool; it just so happened to be the most appropriate skill to land a hit on Gu Fei from the raised platform.

Who knew that his extended leg would actually smash nothing

but dirt, as there was no one on the ground?!

Before Gale Force could even think about anything, something crashed into him from behind and he lost his balance once more. Moreover, his Swallow Smash posture had caused him to fall to the ground on his side rather awkwardly.

Gale Force lifted his head and saw Gu Fei retract his foot from the edge of the platform and shake his head, “You’re no good.”

“Translocation!” Gale Force was fuming. He had made all the necessary preparations for it, yet he had actually forgotten about it at the critical moment, allowing Gu Fei to appear right behind him and deliver a kick that caused him to tumble inelegantly.

“Alright, I’m off!” Gu Fei waved his hand dismissively.

“What! Stop right there!” Gale Force did another kip up and scrambled up the platform. Although he received quite the beating from his two falls, Gu Fei who had eaten his skills would have a significantly lower HP. As for him, he was definitely in an advantageous position right now as he barely took any damage from the two falls. Besides, Gu Fei’s Blink skill should currently be on cool-down after using it, so why would Gale Force let go of such an opportunity?

With that thought in mind, Gale Force did not speak with Gu Fei anymore and merely lifted his hand to score a punch on Gu Fei using the most basic Fighter skill: Heavy Punch.

Gu Fei slightly tilted his body to let the punch pass him and threw a lightning fast uppercut on Gale Force’s jaw. He proceeded to thrust a kick on to the stunned Gale Force’s shoulder, using the impetus to leap into the air and bring the soles of his dirty boots glancing over Gale Force’s cheeks in his downward roll. Using his falling momentum, Gu Fei grabbed a hold of Gale Force’s waist with his arms, but he soon shook his head with a sigh, “I can’t toss you!” Gu Fei let go of Gale Force’s waist, brushed the dust off the latter’s shoulder, and said, “You got what I was trying to do,

though, right?!”

Gale Force was rendered speechless by what he had just witnessed.

Everything Gu Fei had just done incorporated the Fighter job class's skills: Uppercut Punch, Thrusting Kick, Swallow Dropkick, and Seismic Toss.

Just like the Spurring Meteor skill that Gu Fei had used before, his attacks were merely for show and did not have a bit of damage in them. However, the sequencing of moves that Gu Fei had executed far outstripped those that were executed by other Fighters.

Uppercut Punch, Thrusting Kick, and Swallow Dropkick as a follow-up move to strike down an enemy from mid-air... This was a combo that many Fighters dreamed of but could not achieve. But this person... Although his Uppercut Punch and Thrusting Kick could not lift the target mid-air, Gale Force knew that if he truly had the actual skills, that follow-up Swallow Dropkick and finishing move Seismic Toss... If Spurring Meteor was added into that, he would be executing the full skill kit of a Fighter right now. The resulting damage from this combo would definitely be a sight to behold.

“This... How did you do it?” Gale Force hurriedly asked.

“Tempo. Watch your tempo. It needs to be faster,” Gu Fei explained.

“Tempo?” Gale Force pressed on, baffled.

“Mmm...” Gu Fei thought for a bit and figured he needed to speak in a language that this sort of people understood, “Watch the cancels of your skills.”

“Oh...” Gale Force instantly understood what he meant.

“The timing of the skill cancels decides if the combo can be executed in one smooth motion, so you need to practice more!” Gu

Fei said this solemnly.

Gale Force nodded his head blankly. What was this? A Mage was actually pointing out to him, a Fighter, the proper way to sequence his attacks into that combo?

“Keep practicing!” Gu Fei said once more before patting his robe and leaving. He had taken a tumble outside of the raised platform, so Gu Fei’s robe had become dirty all over.

“Black clothes get dusty so easily...” Gale Force could vaguely hear Gu Fei saying this.

Chapter 225 - Calm before the Storm

Gu Fei felt quite depressed as he logged off. He rarely had the chance to pit himself against Fighters, but due to him having an easier time beating them than the other job classes, now that he finally had a chance to go up against one, he somehow ended up giving the Fighter Gale Force a shock, and that was done without pulling out his Moonlit Nightfalls.

This was entirely due to Gu Fei's high standard when it came to kung fu. The Fighter job class in Parallel World was probably designed using the data that had been gathered from some real-life kung fu instructors. But since Gu Fei was a rare top-tier talent in the field of kung fu, those instructors would probably not even come close to his level of martial arts. Just the simplicity of the skills and concepts that they had provided for this game was enough proof that their kung fu talent was nothing to brag about.

Gu Fei went up the rooftop to practice kung fu after he had logged off from the game. Taking out a sandbag, he performed the various skills of the Fighter job class, such as Uppercut Punch, Thrusting Kick, Swallow Dropkick, Seismic Toss, and Spurring Meteor. Despite giving his sandbag a good thrashing, Gu Fei still could not help but sigh to himself, So simple! Truly, it was a pity that his execution of these skills could not generate any damage in-game. He did not even have the Strength to properly execute Seismic Toss. In actuality, without the system temporarily 'gifting' the Fighters the Strength to perform Seismic Toss on any sort of opponent whenever they felt like it, they would not be able to execute the skill, either.

While Gu Fei was busy practicing kung fu on the rooftop, Gale Force was still on the platform at the Martial Field in-game. He was trying to chain the very same skills that Gu Fei had so effortlessly performed before his eyes a while ago to no success... "How is this easy?" Gale Force sighed. Tempo... Canceling... He

repeated these words to himself as sweat rained on the platform due to his exertion.

Meanwhile, on Yunduan City's forums, Young Master's Elite's consecutive wins in the mercenary PvP tournament had left everyone surprised.

The six-man mercenary group's journey toward the semifinals was nothing to scoff at, as the opponents that they had defeated along the way were real heavyweights in the mercenary PvP tournament. The level 4 mercenary groups Cloud Herder and High Cloud, another tournament dark horse Silver Moon, the budding mercenary group Amethyst that many considered to be worthy of being acknowledged as a dark horse as well, and the top mercenary group Four Seas that consisted of the elite members of the number one guild Traversing Four Seas... All these mercenary groups were not just any ordinary entities in Yunduan City. This was especially true of Four Seas. Although that mercenary group had fewer completed missions compared to The Black Hand, it was widely regarded as the strongest based on raw talent and power.

In any case, the final four mercenary groups in the semifinals were as follows: Young Master's Elite, The Black Hand, Water Flower (under Carouse Guild), and Rainbow betwixt the Clouds. Although the name 'Rainbow betwixt the Clouds' sounded fanciful, the mercenary group itself was average at best. What everyone could not fathom, though, was how Rainbow betwixt the Clouds had managed to reach level 4 despite being backed by just the level 3 guild Colored Clouds.

The level 4 mercenary group with its eighty members had truly been blessed for it had never once met a strong mercenary group or a dark horse in the mercenary PvP tournament. The most difficulty that Rainbow betwixt the Clouds had experienced during the tournament was when it had been matched up against some equally mediocre level 3 or level 4 mercenary groups. Nonetheless, during those times, they somehow managed to obtain a pyrrhic

victory.

Others did not have much interest toward Rainbow betwixt the Clouds, as most of their attention was on how far Young Master's Elite could go in the PvP tournament.

With the conclusion of today's guild match, the semifinals opponent of Young Master's Elite was announced as Water Flower, while The Black Hand would be facing Rainbow betwixt the Clouds.

At this moment, Young Master Han and Brave Surge, the guild leader of Carouse, were together in Ray's Bar.

"So this group's actually your creation. Say... Why didn't you join Water Flower?!" Brave Surge asked, feeling rueful. Young Master's Elite's recent deeds were just too controversial. Even if people could not find out about all its members, they were at least able to find the name of the mercenary group's leader by looking it up at the Hall of Mercenaries. Most people would not know who this 'Young Master Han' was, but any members of Carouse Guild would naturally know. After all, the name of the guild Young Master Han belonged to was listed right next his name!

Young Master Han only laughed in response.

"This means that you already know that Mage!" Brave Surge stated. When Young Master Han did not deny his claim, he continued, "You saw how tough it was for us to find him, so why did you not say a word?!"

"He won't let me." Young Master Han easily pushed the blame on Gu Fei for this.

Brave Surge acknowledged his reason and said, "When the match is over, bring your friend to join our guild; it's more fun when there are more people!"

Young Master Han flashed him a wry smile. "In a small group like ours, we do everything by majority vote. I'm only the group

leader in name, and I still need to discuss everything with everyone.”

“Of course, that’s a given. How about you invite everyone to have a drink with us?” Brave Surge persisted.

“How about tomorrow after the match?” Young Master Han would never reject an offer to drink.

“Have you done your preparations on how to face us?” Brave Surge casually asked. He more or less had a good idea of what Young Master Han was capable of.

“Not yet.” Young Master Han smiled secretively, also asking, “How many men are you intending to send out?”

“I haven’t thought of it, either.” Brave Surge flashed him an equally secretive smile.

“I guess we’ll talk about it later, then!” Young Master Han concluded.

“Yes, let’s do that,” Brave Surge agreed, saying, “I’ll take my leave first; enjoy yourself!” With that, he waved his hand, “Ray, I’ll take care of the bill for this table.”

“Surely there’s no need?” Young Master Han pretended to decline.

“No need to be courteous; we’re in the same guild, after all,” Brave Surge laughed boisterously.

Ray looked over to Young Master Han for confirmation and the latter nodded his head. Ray immediately brought the bill over to Brave Surge. The smile on Brave Surge’s lips slightly wavered upon seeing the bill and he remarked, “You’re quite the drinker!”

“It’s better if I take care of the bill myself!” Young Master Han chuckled.

However, Brave Surge already said that he would take care of his bill, so how could a guild leader like him not be a man of his word?

He instantly fished out his coin pouch and settled Young Master Han's bill of over 100 gold coins. The sum itself was not exorbitant, but this was a question of where the money went to. Brave Surge would hardly bat an eyelid if he spent that amount on equipment and such, but spending that amount on liquor made his heart ache. "You should drink less; it's not good for your body." Brave Surge advised with a slightly fearful voice before leaving in a hurry.

How the hell would drinking liquor in-game harm the body? Young Master Han calmly took the tab and asked Ray while scanning it, "Did you include the tab for the entire week?" As Ray nodded his head, Young Master Han said, "That's the sort of quality you should look for in a boss!"

Ray could only smile in response to this.

Nothing else happened that night. When Gu Fei got online the next day and made his way over to Ray's Bar for the pre-match meeting, he was met with a never-before-seen situation.

Inside Ray's Bar, Young Master Han and the rest were currently not inside their usual private room. Instead, they were sitting and drinking together in the bar lounge with Brave Surge and company whom their group was matched up with for today's round of the mercenary PvP tournament. Both sides were discussing about their respective strategies for today's match. What an awkward yet harmonious scene this was!

"This..." Gu Fei did not know what to say to this.

"We meet again!" Brave Surge flashed Gu Fei a warm smile, inviting, "Come take a seat."

"This..." Gu Fei repeated himself, not knowing whether to agree or decline the offer.

"I'm treating everyone to a round of drinks!" Brave Surge smiled pleasantly.

"Didn't we agree on drinking AFTER the match?" Young Master

Han asked, puzzled.

“Drink now and expend all that alcohol in your system during the fight later; wouldn’t that be better?” Brave Surge encouraged.

Young Master Han thought for a moment before smiling, “You’re just afraid that I’ll drink non-stop after the match!”

Brave Surge felt slightly embarrassed that his plot had been seen through. He was actually not a petty person, but Young Master Han’s expenditure had truly given him a fright. How long had it been from the end of mercenary PvP tournament to their yesterday’s meeting? For him to drink that much in such a short time, Brave Surge was convinced that Young Master Han could bankrupt him with his drinking if he was given free rein after the match.

Nonetheless, the sight of the two sides that would be fighting one another in today’s PvP match harmoniously drinking together was just too strange. All the people present did not know what to say to this, so they merely chose to quietly drink the cups of liquor in their hands.

“Are we fighting you guys today?” Gu Fei asked Brave Surge, as he just found out about it now. As Brave Surge nodded his head, Gu Fei praised, “Your spell bombardment is really powerful!”

Brave Surge very humbly replied, “Oh, it’s alright.”

Gu Fei sent out a message, “Svelty! Lend me your magic resistance equipment again; I’m about to fight that guy with that strong spell bombardment.”

Svelte Dancer came barging inside Ray’s Bar before long. She also expressed her surprise at the strange sight of the two competing teams sitting and drinking together.

“Over here!” Gu Fei quickly called out.

“Big Sis Xiaoxi!” Royal God Call was more excited than Gu Fei.

“Hi, Xiaowu,” War Without Wounds faked a calm greeting.

Svelte Dancer waved to everyone before coming to Gu Fei’s side and handing him the equipment. “What’s all this about?”

“Guild Leader Brave Surge here is treating us to some liquor.” Gu Fei chuckled.

Brave Surge recognized the one before him as the prestigious Svelte Dancer. He hurriedly greeted her and quickly called Ray to bring her a drink as well. Inside, he was wondering, This is the richest player in the entire server of Parallel World; does that mean the only worthy beverage in her eyes is the most expensive one?

Svelte Dancer was not passionate about drinking, so she was naturally not fussy over this stuff. She only came here to deliver the equipment Gu Fei had requested. After handing it over to him, she bade everyone farewell and left.

“Look. This coat right here has 73% magic resistance; pretty impressive, yeah?!” Gu Fei proudly showed the item to Brave Surge.

“Impressive...” Brave Surge affirmed, yet his eyes was not looking at the equipment Gu Fei was holding; instead, he was staring at the more impressive living thing before him.

Even if both sides were cordial right now, they were still going to fight against one another later. Why would anyone show such equipment with high magic resistance this easily? This guy... Just how high is this guy’s self-confidence?! Brave Surge sighed in awe.

Chapter 226 - Where is the trap

Inside Ray's Bar, the two teams drank liquor rather amiably. Gu Fei kept the equipment Svelte Dancer had lent him as Brave Surge busily made his calculations.

If the item truly had 73% magic resistance, then it would almost be like having a cheat. Normally, he would have to hit Gu Fei with Descending Wheel of Flames thrice to kill the latter off. If Gu Fei wore the coat, it would take eleven of those spells to finish him off... That was a really high requirement.

Although Water Flower mercenary group was under Carouse Guild, the strength of the guild and mercenary group was not really the same. This was mainly because of the member limitation each type of organization had. While Carouse Guild could create a spell bombardment consisting of over one hundred Mages, Water Flower mercenary group with its eighty members could not. Creating an all-Mage mercenary group was not probable as defeating a team that did not have a balanced job class distribution was as easy as pie. With such a condition, Water Flower would have a hard time employing a Mage formation.

Water Flower was already on the weaker side, but with Gu Fei bringing an item with 73% magic resistance, the group's Mages would be nothing more than match sticks for him.

How on Earth are we going to fight him? Looks like I have to come up with a whole new plan! Brave Surge started to ponder on the matter for a while.

Not much time was left until the match's start. All were constantly checking the time, wanting their involvement in this awkward drinking session to end. When someone mumbled, "It's almost time," the rest of them hurriedly voiced their assent and quickly stood up from their seats. Everyone said to either side, "See you on the map." With tacit understanding, Young Master's Elite

left the bar via the left door while Water Flower exited the establishment through the right door. Both sides also took different routes to head over to the teleportation array.

The pre-PvP meeting that had turned into a quiet drinking session due to Brave Surge's sudden appearance had to be conducted on the road, instead. Since Young Master Han was a member of Carouse Guild, he provided the information about their opponents for today's match given that the members of Water Flower mercenary group were made up of the elites of Carouse.

All, except for Sword Demon, gawked at Young Master Han when he recited with ease the details of all the eighty members of Water Flower. Most of them zoned him out near the end, yet they were all impressed at Young Master Han's nearly eidetic memory. Even Brother Assist had to refer to his information booklet when giving out information.

"That's eighty people!" The six of them arrived by the teleportation array when they said this. Actually, Royal God Call was still counting with his fingers the number of players Young Master Han had mentioned as they entered the 'changing room', "Is that all eighty of them?"

"Yup!" Brother Assist nodded his head. Having ample knowledgeable of statistics and data collection, he could not help but exclaim, "It's such a waste for you to not do information gathering!"

"Any field that doesn't have me suffers a loss," Young Master Han said.

Everyone was no longer in the mood to praise him upon hearing his bragging.

"Since you have a good understanding of the entire Water Flower, does that mean that you are certain of our victory for this match?" Brother Assist asked.

“It’s somewhat useful, but that’s hardly relevant,” Young Master Han replied, saying, “I just enjoy seeing you guys look on me with admiration as I speak!”

“Get lost!” Everyone immediately glared at him contemptuously, making sure to put as much hate in their eyes.

With not much time left until the match’s start, seventy-two players of Water Flower hurriedly entered the ‘changing room’. It seemed that the remaining eight members had something on and would not be participating in the match. In no time at all, the ten-second countdown ended and both sides were transported into the real PvP arena, officially beginning the semifinals of the mercenary PvP tournament.

“Where’s the high ground?!” They all limbered up and impatiently asked this of Young Master Han.

Young Master Han snorted, “Many people thought they could see through me, yet they were sorely mistaken.”

“Fine! We’re all mistaken! Stop playing mind games with us and just tell us of your plan! Otherwise, I’m just gonna go and face them head on.” Gu Fei could no longer stand his cryptic words.

“Follow me!” Young Master Han headed forward. The five men exchanged looks before following Young Master Han. Brother Assist once more tried to find some confidence from Sword Demon, yet he did not get his wish this time, as Sword Demon’s current expression showed a hint of doubt. “Sword Demon...” Brother Assist’s voice trembled as he called out.

Sword Demon offered without prompting, “There was this one time that someone had guessed his intention, so he intentionally changed the original plan to something else. After that—”

“Did you lose?” Brother Assist anxiously interrupted.

“No. We won. But our losses were greater than what we would have incurred had we stuck to the original plan. Even the guy who

had figured out his plan was among the casualties,” Sword Demon answered.

“Wow. He is really vicious!” Gu Fei, who was eavesdropping on Brother Assist and Sword Demon’s conversation, could not help but exclaim this.

“Is he going to send us all to our death?” Royal God Call asked with trepidation.

“He can’t do that if everyone’s at fault! Didn’t everyone shout at him just now?” Brother Assist asked.

“I didn’t shout,” Sword Demon replied.

“I, too,” Gu Fei seconded.

“You’re lying! I was right beside you, so I clearly heard your shout,” Royal God Call exposed Gu Fei.

“Calm down, young man. While you only have the possibility of Young Master sending you to your death, I can guarantee that you will die if you insist on claiming I shouted at him just now,” Gu Fei threatened.

“I’m not gonna live either way, anyway; each of you is more fiendish than the last.” Royal God Call was in tears.

The five did not say anything more when Young Master Han brought them inside a forest. After a short distance, Young Master Han stopped and turned around. The sunlight filtering through the leaves of the surrounding trees illuminated his face. His expression looked even more sinister under that mottled light, giving the five men goosebumps.

“Alright. Climb up!” Young Master Han suddenly ordered.

“Up where?” the five men asked cautiously.

“Up the tree,” Young Master Han slapped the tree beside him.

“Oh. Just up the tree...” The five men sighed in relief before hurriedly asking, “Why are we going up the tree?”

“It’s a tactic!” Young Master Han answered.

“Tactic?” The five expressed their skepticism as they were wary of being tormented by Young Master Han.

Young Master Han decided to set himself as an example and had Sword Demon give him a boost to climb up the tree first. Once he climbed high enough, he looked around for a bit before calling the others to join him. “Miles and Royal, you two climb up first.”

The two were stunned. Honestly speaking, they had been the most vocal in ordering Young Master Han to head to a high ground. Royal God Call was a teenager, so naturally he did not care about the volume of his voice when speaking. As for Gu Fei, being a teacher had made him used to raising his voice to get the attention of an entire class, so he somewhat failed to realize how loud he was. Is this truly a trap to take revenge on us? the two thought to themselves.

“I can’t climb up the tree!” Royal God Call immediately tried to escape.

“I’ll help you up!” War Without Wounds was naturally glad to see Royal God Call suffer, so he quickly grabbed a hold of the escaping Royal God Call.

“Wounds, you sshle! Go eat sh*t!” Royal God Call cursed.

War Without Wounds was not bothered by his cursing and merely found a low hanging branch to toss Royal God Call over. Royal God Call attempted to jump down from the low hanging branch, yet War Without Wounds sadistically positioned the tip of his sword toward Royal God Call. Royal God Call quickly grabbed on to the tree trunk once he realized what would happen to him if he fell.

“Over there. Head over there,” Young Master Han directed Royal God Call to a certain section of the tree.

Royal God Call carefully moved atop the tree, occasionally

checking for an opportunity to drop to the ground. Unfortunately for him, War Without Wounds was keeping an eye on him from below. Gu Fei joined War Without Wounds in staring at him, even sending him a message, “Just check it out. Don’t worry; I’ll save you if there’s danger.” Royal God Call felt helpless in this situation. He could only cry bitter tears inside for having acquired such a vile bunch of friends.

With Young Master Han’s direction, Royal God Call climbed higher and higher up the tree. He no longer had any intention of ‘accidentally’ taking a misstep and falling to the ground with how high he was up the tree. Instead, he began to gingerly test the sturdiness of the tree branches. He would not put it past Young Master Han to do something like make him stand on a tree branch that could not hold his weight.

Truly, deciphering Young Master Han’s thoughts was a difficult affair. As Royal God Call safely got to his designated spot, his inbox immediately burst into activity. “So how is it? Is there anything unusual up there?” Gu Fei and the rest inquired. They used me as a guinea pig! Royal God Call was angry at everyone’s inquiry.

“Miles, you should hurry up, too. Get over to that position right there,” Young Master Han instructed as he pointed toward another location atop the tree. He then called out to the other three men, “Everyone, come on up. Randomly find a place to hide.”

War Without Wounds had the highest Strength among them, so he officially became the helper of everyone to climb up the tree. Lifting Brother Assist and Sword Demon up the tree, he then turned his gaze over to Gu Fei.

“No need,” Gu Fei refused his aid. Pointing his finger to a certain tree branch, he said, “Translocation! Blink!” With a swish, Gu Fei was already standing on that spot.

“I know you don’t need my help; I want you to give me a boost!” War Without Wounds fumed.

Gu Fei glanced at his burly frame before neutrally asking, “Is that even possible?”

Indeed, getting War Without Wounds up the tree was problematic. Only after a few of them worked together did they manage to pull him up the tree.

Gu Fei sighed repeatedly once he saw War Without Wounds’ clumsy posture on a tree branch, “I think it’s best if you don’t join us up here!” He then proceeded to lift Sword Demon up the tree as he continued to teleport himself from branch to branch.

“Good. Train your Blink skill a bit more. You’ll be using it shortly,” Young Master Han said.

“Okay. What now? What do we do next?” Brother Assist asked. Besides War Without Wounds, everyone else was already in position.

“We’re waiting for Brave Surge to find us,” Young Master Han replied with a slight smile.

“What if he can’t find us?”

“Of course, he will. If Foe-herder could find us, why couldn’t he?”

“Then, what do we do after that?” This was what everyone was really concerned about.

“This entire forest is a trap prepared for them.”

“Oh!” Everyone sighed in relief. It turned out that Young Master Han at least had the decency to exclude them from this trap for Brave Surge and his men.

Chapter 227 - The Tenacious Uncle Wounds

All were quiet in the forest as War Without Wounds clumsily shifted himself atop the tree. Parallel World was mainly designed to follow the laws of physics and logic, so any branch that could normally bear a person with average weight would simply splinter with War Without Wounds on it.

They did not really care if War Without Wounds died by falling from the tree; what everyone was worried of was that the loud sound of his fall would attract Brave Surge and his men over.

“Since this is a trap, why don’t we have someone lure them over?” one of them asked Young Master Han.

“The later they come, the better for us. If they assume that we are not planning to ambush them but are merely hiding from them, they’ll be less vigilant. Our plan will be evident if we try to lure them here,” Young Master Han explained.

Thus, the six men of Young Master’s Elite continued to camp atop the tree.

Outside the forest, Brave Surge was currently leading his men to look for any traces of Young Master’s Elite. After asking the other mercenary groups that had lost to Young Master’s Elite previously, Brave Surge learned that the key to defeating this team was not to divide their manpower!

The six men were elites of the elites, so none of the players of Water Flower knew exactly how great the catalytic reaction they would get when the entire group was gathered together. Since Brave Surge had no wish to use his men to gauge this, this was the only choice left for him.

All seventy-two members of Water Flower maintained a tight formation as they searched through the map for their opponents. Seventy-two versus six... The size of this map was about the same

as that map when Young Master's Elite had gone up against Cloud Herder. And yet, Brave Surge could not find even a shadow of the six enemies when he brought his seventy-one men to the highest vantage point of the map.

Blind spots, such as ditches, depressions, forests, and back of hills, existed from where he stood. Brave Surge could only leave a mercenary on the high ground to be their lookout as he brought the other members to search all these aforementioned blind spots for their enemies.

Following along the ditches, looking inside the land depressions, and traversing through hills and forests... Water Flower searched everywhere but still could find any member of Young Master's Elite. Twenty-one minutes had passed since the beginning of this match and there were only forty-seven minutes left.

Being unable to locate the enemies left Brave Surge feeling anxious. Brave Surge's Carouse Guild had once lost a match due to the Grand Kiting strategy, and it was a ridiculous loss, too. Despite having over six hundred men at his disposal at the time, they had not been able to catch Svelte Dancer. Therefore, he was really wary of the said strategy to the point of not wanting to leave that one man atop that hill. He kept looking back at that single man as they left the vantage point for fear of the man getting killed. He was deathly afraid of losing the match with a score of 0 against 1.

That fortunately did not happen, yet Brave Surge remained anxious of not finding any member of Young Master's Elite. He could almost perceive the opponents' intention: They were intentionally stalling for time. The Grand Kiting strategy was more effective near the end of the match, so the later the fighting occurred, the better it was for the opposing side. Perhaps, they would only reveal themselves in the final five minutes of the match, letting their Archer insta-kill one of his men. How bitter would such a loss be?!

No. This can't continue like this! Brave Surge was well aware of

this fact, yet he just could not locate the enemies. His lookout by the vantage point confidently stated that he saw no movement from the opposing team, and they also found no one in the blind spots that they had gone to, so where were those six men?

Brave Surge and the other seventy-one members of Water Flower racked their brains. Compared to just one man thinking, the idea that could be generated with seventy-men putting their heads together was truly amazing. Finally, someone thought of something, “Up in the trees! That’s the only place we have yet to check!”

The others immediately regarded that idea in earnest. Indeed, they must be up the trees.

There were forests and trees all over this PvP arena, so they could literally be hiding anywhere. Without sparing another moment, Brave Surge immediately brought his men to comb through the map together.

The six members of Young Master’s Elite hiding between the leaves and branches of a tree had previously seen Water Flower’s men pass by them. Some enemy players had even lifted their heads, yet they had done it so casually that they were unable to spot the well hidden members of Young Master’s Elite. Adding the fact that there was poor lighting within the trees and looking up the treetops would often face the glare of the sun, none of them was able to spot anything strange.

After the enemies left the first time, Young Master Han warned everyone, “The next time they come by, they are surely aware of the fact that we are atop a tree.”

The second round of searching came not too long after. Brave Surge and his men were pretty lucky, as they managed to stumble upon the forest that the six men of Young Master’s Elite were hiding. It was the second out of the five forests in the map that they had searched out.

They had already established a search method in the first forest; once they entered the second forest, the Water Flower's Mages and Archers relentlessly unleashed their spells and arrows on the trees, Warriors slammed themselves against the trees, and the other job classes prepared for a fight to begin once any enemies fell down.

That was when Young Master Han sent out a message on the mercenary channel: "Hold fast!" Following this, he sent Gu Fei a private message: "Prepare to attack using your AOE spell, Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno."

"Where at?" Gu Fei asked.

"Just drop it wherever someone falls down!" Young Master Han replied.

Gu Fei's heart shuddered. Would Young Master Han's habit of using his men as bait ever change?

Young Master Han quickly sent out this follow-up message: "Even if I fall, don't you dare show mercy!"

"Don't worry; I'll be even more vicious!" Gu Fei answered helplessly. This was but a game, after all, so sacrificing even himself was fair game here. No matter how others criticized him for his vicious method, Gu Fei knew that Young Master Han was absolutely remorseless about it deep inside. This narcissistic person was probably thinking right now: If even my mighty self can be sacrificed, then any of you inferior beings can be, too.

Affairs of the human heart were never that easy to figure out as all always valued themselves the most! People would naturally hail someone for sacrificing himself or herself for others, but it would be hard to justify and understand the necessity of such sacrificial act if others were unwillingly dragged along to die as well.

Whatever the case might be, this was how Young Master Han had intended to fight in this match. Gu Fei could not help but admit that this callous tactic was effective.

“Hold fast!” Young Master Han told everyone this.

Gu Fei knew that the others would understand his reasoning if Young Master Han explained it to them, so why must he do it in a hurtful way? Young Master Han’s personality was truly very unpleasant. As he sighed, he heard the sound of a human falling from a tree on his left side. War Without Wounds tried so hard to remain steady in his position, yet he was still the first to fall to the ground.

“Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno! Arise!” Gu Fei quickly chanted as he pointed to where War Without Wounds had fallen, feeling discomfited the entire time.

This was one example of the usefulness of Gu Fei’s long casting time. When War Without Wounds fell from the tree, the men of Water Flower naturally went to surround him, so if the spell had a short casting time, it would erupt even before the enemies arrived by War Without Wounds’ side, essentially wasting his effort and mana. Due to the spell delay, plenty of men who had gathered by War Without Wounds’ vicinity were implicated in the spell’s eruption.

BOOM! Amid the flames, Gu Fei saw War Without Wounds stand up and unleash his Cyclone. Although War Without Wounds was just a typically immoral uncle, he was never passive in a fight. Proof of this was that he always made sure to have enough Rage points to unleash Cyclone.

When War Without Wounds started Cyclone, the flames in the surrounding area seemed to ignite even faster with the skill’s force. Even War Without Wounds himself was heartlessly engulfed by the raging inferno.

The unsuspecting men of Water Flower, who were in the midst of celebrating the fact that they had finally found a foe, were soon turned into streams of white light by the raging inferno. Some were able to survive this attack due to having better equipment at

level 40. Although Gu Fei was holding on to the level 70 Moonlit Nightfalls, his low Intelligence prevented him from unleashing the sword's full Spell Damage. Moreover, the weapon's dual attributes of physical damage and magic damage meant either of those was limited to the level 60 standard. With such stats, he would even be unable to insta-kill those job classes with low HP were it not for the fact that Gu Fei was wearing Midnight Spirit Robe that increased his Magic Attack Power by a lot.

Water Flower mercenary group was filled with the skilled players of Carouse Guild. There were even some low HP players that had top-grade equipment among them, so they were able to survive Gu Fei's spell, albeit their faces went pale when they saw how low their HP had dipped. Among those that survived was War Without Wounds.

War Without Wounds had also not fallen despite suffering the full might of Gu Fei's AOE spell, so he had not given up either. Those that had rushed toward him were players with fast speed but low HP, so plenty of them were killed off by Gu Fei's spell. War Without Wounds stopped his Cyclone and charged toward a nearby Warrior with a mighty bellow.

This Warrior had just taken damage from Gu Fei's spell, so he had lost quite a chunk of HP. With the ensuing Burn effect of the raging inferno, he hurriedly attempted to retreat from the spell's AOE. Unfortunately for the enemy Warrior, War Without Wounds canceled Cyclone and activated Charge toward him to also escape the still burning flames that sought to consume the players within the spell's AOE. War Without Wounds' Charge hit the man and the latter was flung out with his butt still on fire, turning into a beam of white light before he even landed on the ground. War Without Wounds roared once more as he brandished his claymores and cleaved hard at another enemy player that had yet to die, sending the latter hurtling toward a tree. He did not use a skill for this strike, so the damage was low. The player who had just been

thrown into the tree blankly stared at the now fleeing War Without Wounds.

War Without Wounds proved his awareness of his current situation of being dealt continuous damage by Gu Fei's spell by quickly leaping away from its AOE once he cleared the two enemy players blocking his path.

However, the men of Water Flower had once more surrounded him. War Without Wounds no longer had much HP after taking the brunt of Gu Fei's spell, yet he maintained his tenacious resistance.

"Chance!" Young Master Han quickly sent Gu Fei this message: "Cast another one."

Gu Fei, who had been expecting his message, readied his sword as he typed: "Roger!" He then shouted, "Descending Wheel of Flames!"

Young Master Han was angered by his action and fired off another message: "What are you yelling for?"

Gu Fei did not reply to him this time. This was because he had gracefully leaped off the tree after saying the incantation.

Chapter 228 - A Priest's Golden Ratio

Brave Surge, who was taking the lead in this assault, calmed his panicking men. When Gu Fei's Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno sprouted from beneath the ground, all the members of Water Flower mercenary group started to panic as they knew full well just how high Gu Fei's Spell Damage was. What was worse was that everyone had been caught unaware by this sneaky attack and had no means to dodge it in time. To make matters worse, none of them had any idea where the spellcaster who had unleashed this spell was despite having lost quite a few of their compatriots as the fire raged on.

The melee job classes surrounded War Without Wounds as Brave Surge brought the Mages, Archers, and other ranged job classes to search for Gu Fei. From Brave Surge's combat experience, he could tell where Gu Fei was situated when he cast Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno. He was sure that Gu Fei was near them, so he and the rest of Water Flower only searched within the nearby area.

Just as they aimed their magic staves and bows toward the treetops, Gu Fei's loud cry of Descending Wheel of Flames traveled over to their ears. As everyone was once again panicking over Gu Fei's spell, Brave Surge quickly hollered, "Calm down! Watch for the spell and react accordingly."

Descending Wheel of Flames was incomparable to Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno, as it would always take some time to come crashing down onto the ground, so any job class with decent speed should be able to somehow dodge it.

And yet, the flame wheel never came to be. Instead, Gu Fei was the one that had come crashing down on them from the tree above after he had yelled out the incantation.

Gu Fei was falling so fast that no one registered it in time, much less attack him. All they saw was Gu Fei diving head-first, his feet

pointed toward the sky, toward where War Without Wounds was making his last stand. Gu Fei's hand suddenly moved to draw out his Moonlit Nightfalls mid-air. Extending the sword past his head with his wrist slightly angled, he yelled grandly, "Unifying Heaven and Earth! Twin Incineration! Incinerate!"

Everyone felt unsure of what sort of spell he had just chanted. Shortly after, they saw a fiery dragon burst forth from Gu Fei's sword tip and rapidly spiraled downward right before him. He had actually used Twin Incineration to draw out a miniature version of Descending Wheel of Flames by his hand!

Gu Fei descended on the space War Without Wounds was occupying, as the circle of fire he drew blazingly revolved around all the players closing in on War Without Wounds. The Spell Damage of Gu Fei's Twin Incineration was on another level compared to all his other spells due to his high proficiency of it.

As for the words that came before the incantation, Gu Fei was not talking gibberish. The technique Gu Fei performed as he dove down was Gu's Family's sword style, and it was called 'Unifying Heaven and Earth'.

"SO COOL!" War Without Wounds was extremely moved by Gu Fei's unexpected assistance. He yelled at the top of his lungs and raised his arms to catch the falling Gu Fei. This was a simple task for a barbaric Warrior like him.

However, Gu Fei instead used his offered arms to twist his body parallel to the ground. With his left hand grabbing a hold of War Without Wounds' shoulder, he kicked out toward a player standing by the outer circle and hit the target's face. That kick was not the end of it; Gu Fei began stepping on every player around with War Without Wounds acting as the fulcrum. His kicks resounded and the enemies around War Without Wounds were all given a footprint on their faces. Since his Mage character had low Strength, Gu Fei's kicks were more like light taps that produced imprints starting from their foreheads down to their chins. "Give

me a boost!” he hurriedly requested from War Without Wounds.

War Without Wounds thought Gu Fei had some sort of ultimate move left so he pushed the latter upward. War Without Wounds' mighty Strength allowed Gu Fei to soar two meters in the air and strike a majestic pose. Mid-air, Gu Fei pointed his finger toward a certain location and chanted, “Translocation, Blink!” With a swish, Gu Fei disappeared from his position.

War Without Wounds' eyes nearly fell out when he saw this and he angrily shouted, “F*ck! And you dare call yourself a bro?!”

Gu Fei was originally just a meter off the ground, but with War Without Wounds' help, he floated for two more meters. This allowed Gu Fei to reappear somewhere eight meters off the ground – among the branches and leaves, to be exact. Adding the five-meter radius of his Blink, none managed to see where Gu Fei had teleported himself.

The entire forest became quiet once more.

Gu Fei dove from the sky, insta-killed a whole circle of players with his Twin Incineration, gave everyone around War Without Wounds an imprint each through seemingly shadow-less kicks, and subsequently left the scene without landing his feet on the ground. Everything happened in a brief moment, leaving everyone breathless with his fighting rhythm and flawlessly chained movement.

This was especially true of those whose faces and noses were unceremoniously trod on by Gu Fei. They were currently holding their faces while staring blankly upward.

War Without Wounds was still in a precarious position, but his lack of morals resurfaced once he realized that everyone around him was seemingly petrified. The men of Water Flower awakened from their stupor just as he was about to sneak off. The opposing men halted their contemplation of Gu Fei's brilliant intervention and collectively struck War Without Wounds with their weapons.

War Without Wounds no longer heroically took the enemies' attacks like before. Fending off some of the enemies' attacks, he wailed, "Miles, f*ck*ng hurry up and save me!"

"Bro, just die in peace!" As War Without Wounds received this message from Gu Fei, he caught sight of a spark of fire coming into existence above him and the real flame wheel came crashing toward him.

He had already suffered Gu Fei's Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno as well the Water Flower's men's attacks, so War Without Wounds would surely not survive Gu Fei's recently cast Descending Wheel of Flames. Just as he waited for his impending death, a pure white light enveloped him. This light's appearance was not due to him dying but was due to a Priest bestowing Heal on him.

War Without Wounds once more survived Gu Fei's spell with this Heal. However, his HP reached a point where even a light tap would send him out of the PvP arena. Fortunately for him, a series of Heal landed on him after the first and his HP began to recover in no time.

"Aye. You're willing to lend him a hand?" Gu Fei asked, shocked.

"Mhm. War Without Wounds' equipment isn't bad, and he has done well to survive this far, so I'm letting him be the bait for much longer," Young Master Han replied.

On the opposing team, Brave Surge recognized the quick and efficient Heal of the all-Spirit build Priest Young Master Han.

There were two qualities to a Priest's Heal: first was its speed and second was its effect. Speed included the casting time as well as the entire bestowing process of the skill. Naturally, the shorter the casting time and bestowing process were, the more efficient the Heal would be. As for effectiveness, this obviously referred to the amount of HP recovered from each cast of Heal. The stats that affected the skill's efficacy were the character's Intelligence

followed by Endurance, while the stats that affected speed were mainly Spirit followed by Intelligence.

The natural stat growth of Priests prioritized Endurance. Thus, most Priests in Parallel World focused their point allocation on Endurance. Not only would doing this increase their HP and improve their survivability, it would also increase the effectiveness of their Heal, essentially killing two birds with one stone. Splitting the 5 stat points by putting 4 points to Endurance and 1 point to Intelligence, 3 points to Endurance and 1 point each to Intelligence and Spirit, or 3 points to Endurance and 2 points to Intelligence... were how most Priests built their characters. Not one of them considered Endurance to be the least important stat. In fact, nine out of ten Priests in Parallel World would allocate their stats in this manner.

For many players to use such distributions, it could be assumed that such builds were definitely not wrong and were surely the most essential builds for survival. However, such builds could not bring out the highest efficacy of the Priest's Heal. Naturally, there were few who discarded Endurance to focus on pure Intelligence and Spirit build. The purpose of these sorts of builds was to fully use the abilities of a Priest.

To reach such an extreme level, the speed and effectiveness would have to be perfectly balanced and Priests called this pairing that ignored Endurance as the 'Golden Ratio'. From the game's official release until now, Priests with Golden Ratio were only rumored existences. Eventually, it transformed into a sort of joke, as every Priest believed that his or her build was the Golden Ratio. Some Priests who did not have a heavy Endurance build even called their stat point allocation as the true Golden Ratio.

Plenty of contrasting opinions existed for this and they were open to endless debates and discussions.

Previously, when players of Carouse were forming parties to grind levels, Brave Surge and Young Master Han happened to be

part of the same party that talked about the Golden Ratio of Priests.

All the party members had different opinions regarding this, with some non-Priest players expressing their views on the matter. In the end, the taciturn Young Master Han chillingly said, “What’s there to argue about? Whoever is the best Priest will naturally have a build that is closest to this Golden Ratio!”

This statement caused Brave Surge to take note of the Priest Young Master Han, and that was when he realized that the latter was not just an average ‘skilled expert’. In terms of skill and awareness, he was top-notch. Brave Surge had never seen a more exceptional Priest throughout Parallel World than him.

By Young Master Han’s reasoning, Brave Surge recognized him as the Priest closest to having the Golden Ratio. Just take the incident before him as an example; one Heal from Young Master Han had saved this Warrior’s life from Gu Fei’s Descending Wheel of Flames and the successive Heal that followed quickly filled the Warrior’s HP to full. Out of all the Priests Brave Surge knew, only Young Master Han could do this. To better illustrate this point, Water Flower had Priests as well and they were also experts. However, not one of them could timely save someone’s life from the flame wheel. Even those with fast reaction speed were unable to react accordingly.

War Without Wounds’ fighting spirit surged forth once his HP was filled up, and he sent several players near him flying outward with a swing of his claymore. Some of these players, especially the low HP Thieves, that had already taken Gu Fei’s Descending Wheel of Flames, were killed off by his assault. As for those high HP Warriors, they were beaten black and blue by War Without Wounds’ reinvigorated assault.

Brave Surge was not looking at this scene, though. Instead, he was signaling several of the Priests with him to assist the others accordingly.

Water Flower mercenary group brought in seventy-two men for this match. Although Gu Fei's spells and kicks and War Without Wounds' explosive assault killed off seventeen of his men, the remaining fifty-five men were enough to deal with a Warrior like War Without Wounds. Nonetheless, what they needed to be on guard against were the untraceable attacks coming from above and from the surrounding area.

Chapter 229

Despite the lack of Priests to assist them, the Warriors of Water Flower mercenary group resolutely engaged War Without Wounds in a hot-blooded fight. War Without Wounds, whose back was leaning on a great oak, put up a laudable resistance against the five enemies.

This fight highlighted War Without Wounds' wise decision to dedicate a hefty portion of his profit from the previous 'meet and greet' into purchasing top-grade equipment. Warriors did not have the ability to launch sneak attacks like Thieves, nor did they have the specialty of performing combo attacks like Fighters. They would usually find themselves clashing with opponents head on, pitting their HP with others', and exchanging blows upfront, so it was nearly impossible for them to avoid receiving damage. Receiving eight hundred injuries in exchange for the lives of a thousand enemies¹ was the most apt depiction of a Warrior's PvP, especially when it was a fight between Warriors.

Counterattacking the enemy's every blow was a good move for a Warrior in a one-versus-one PvP. Meanwhile, the only way for a Warrior to last longer in a one-versus-many fight was to possess outstanding defense, as it would allow the Warrior to withstand the enemies' attacks as he or she took down as many of them while allowing a comrade Priest to aid him or her in time.

To be able to hold his own against more than five enemies without requiring urgent assistance... This was what War Without Wounds had been thinking while making his equipment purchases. His weapons and the enemies' fiercely clashed and separated beneath the oak tree.

Brave Surge was not watching this chilling fight as he was busy organizing the Mages and Archers in his group to begin assaulting the enemies atop the trees. Even the few Priests that were idly standing on the sidelines were asked to throw Holy Ball into the

mix. The damage dealt by a Priest's Holy Ball might be minute, but its glow would be more helpful in illuminating the shaded areas between branches and leaves than a Mage's Fireball.

The five men of Young Master's Elite hid motionlessly among the branches and leaves of the trees for fear of being shot senselessly by the enemies. In fact, Royal God Call remained still despite the pain he was feeling after getting struck by an arrow on his butt and could only hatefully remember the culprit for his suffering.

Brave Surge and his men were not just shooting blindly. The spell Gu Fei had previously cast gave Brave Surge an idea of where the others could possibly be hiding; Young Master Han's Heal also ended up pointing out his team's hiding place. After discussing things with two Priests and pointing to a certain direction, Brave Surge commanded everyone to target the area he had just indicated.

Gu Fei knew that Young Master Han could no longer hide himself from the enemies' newly unleashed wave of attacks. Although this first wave of attack did not land too near his hiding spot, given Brave Surge's meticulousness and dedication at locating them, it was only a matter of time before Young Master Han would be struck down.

Gu Fei was hiding not too far from Young Master Han's location, so the probability of him being in their line of bombardment was high. However, unlike Young Master Han, Gu Fei had the Blink skill! Seeing that the enemies' attacks were about to arrive and that his Blink skill's cool-down time had ended, Gu Fei furtively teleported into a relatively safe place. He turned his head over and saw that a wave of attacks was quickly traveling to where Young Master Han was.

Young Master Han lacked any skill that would let him furtively move to another location. Climbing further up the tree would only reveal his exact position to the enemies, as well. Without any viable method to save his life, Young Master Han could only wait

for his death.

Despite his helpless situation, Young Master Han remained calm and collected. He even unhurriedly took out a small bottle of liquor from his dimensional pocket and leisurely drank its content. Just as the attacks were about to hit him, he nonchalantly threw that bottle toward War Without Wounds and the enemy Warriors that were wildly exchanging blows without anyone noticing. That bottle struck an enemy Warrior's shoulder and loudly shattered into pieces.

“AHHH! THAT GUY'S BACK!” The bunch of Warriors battling with War Without Wounds scattered about as if their butts were on fire. After a bit, the two sides looked at one another with stunned eyes.

Their group leader Brave Surge felt quite embarrassed by his men's cowardice and chided them, “Didn't I tell you all to not panic and to calmly analyze the situation when something happens? Don't get so flustered if you don't even know what the origin of the sound was!”

Actually, these men should not be blamed for reacting like this, as they were merely guarding themselves against Gu Fei's attacks to the point that they became overly sensitive to even the slightest changes in their surroundings after they saw his indomitable fighting prowess.

Brave Surge had been keeping his head up this whole time, so he had identified that that thrown object was an empty liquor bottle in the first instance. He commanded his men's attacks to direct their attacks at where the bottle had come from. At this same moment, they saw Young Master Han suddenly part the branches, peek his head out, and laugh at them before jumping down toward the crowd. “Follow up with a spell” was the message that Gu Fei received from him.

However, Brave Surge saw through this particular tactic and he

immediately ordered his men who were about to surround Young Master Han to stop, “Don’t approach him. Archers and Mages, prepare to attack when he lands!”

Young Master Han landed on the ground with a thud, eliciting a wince from him. This was an eight-meter jump, so he received some damage from the fall. When the Archers and Mages saw Young Master Han land, they immediately launched their attacks on him. Young Master Han had anticipated their attacks from the treetop and he had chosen to land at this particular spot due to this.

Without pausing to think, Young Master Han rolled to the side and hid himself behind a nearby large tree. This position was a dead angle for Brave Surge and the other ranged job classes. Any skill that required direct view of the target was made useless in the face of a proper cover. Only skills like Homing Projectile and Fireball were able to track their targets once they took cover. Sadly, those were useless against Young Master Han as well, as his job class was a Priest, and he was someone who had managed to attain the legendary Golden Ratio at that. Therefore, it was a simple task for him to grasp the timing between their attacks and survive the damage dealt by them through his Heal.

“Quickly move!” Brave Surge signaled everyone to change their positions to spots that would allow them to hit the target.

He intended for them to shift angle and have Young Master Han who was hiding behind the tree enter their line of sight, yet even after changing positions, his men’s view was still blocked by something else. Truly, the spot Young Master Han had chosen was exceptional.

Nothing was perfect in this world, though, so an Archer eventually found a good position where he could clearly see Young Master Han’s figure that was leaning against the tree. As he excitedly nocked his bow, he felt a breeze by his waist. Turning his head to look, he was greeted by Sword Demon’s permanent scowl

before being sent out of the PvP arena.

“There’s another one over here!” Someone discovered Sword Demon’s presence and hurriedly unleashed an attack over to him. But with practiced deftness, Sword Demon delved deep into the forest and immediately found a cluster of trees to obstruct the Archers and Mages’ clear view of him.

“124, 253... 120, 251... 117, 146...” Sword Demon’s private message constantly flashed with coordinates from Young Master Han. With Young Master Han directing him superbly, Sword Demon easily weaved through the forest, looped about, and appeared behind the backs of three different Archers or Mages, and assassinated them. Overall, he had killed four players including that Archer from before.

Fear ran up Brave Surge’s spine and he hurriedly ordered his men back to prevent them from spreading too far out.

This convoluted command was another decision that paid attention to one matter while losing sight of another. Sword Demon’s ghost-like movement derailed Brave Surge’s train of thought. Gathering his men to one spot would just result to them facing a more frightening foe.

As the Archers and Mages gathered around Brave Surge, the ground beneath their feet began to heat up. “Oh, no!” Those with fast reaction speed tried to flee from the spell’s AOE as tears streamed down their faces, but it was too late. The Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno spell rose from the ground and its flames grew in intensity with each passing second. This group of low HP players simply had no way of surviving Gu Fei’s fiery assault. Some Mages with high magic defense managed to cling on to their dear lives, but before they could celebrate, Descending Wheel of Flames had finished forming in the sky and descended on their heads. The Mages and Archers of Water Flower mercenary group were smashed into smithereens after being sandwiched between Gu Fei’s two spells.

Everything descended into chaos and Brave Surge lost control of his men. Young Master Han even managed to find time to peek his head from behind the tree and bestow Heal on War Without Wounds to recover some of his HP.

War Without Wounds, who was steadfastly pitting his HP with the other enemy Warriors, suddenly perked up. This was not due to Young Master Han's Heal but due to his Cyclone's cool-down time finally ending. While Cyclone had incredibly high damage output, the skill's cool-down time was appropriately lengthy.

Young Master Han's Heal boosted War Without Wounds' confidence to a whole new level. Ignoring the attacks of the five men, War Without Wounds resolutely took two steps forward and unleashed Cyclone with his two claymores whirling out.

War Without Wounds had high defense and offense, so the five Warriors felt great remorse well within them as they faced his vicious attacks. They had originally thought that the five of them would be able to easily finish off War Without Wounds, yet they had never imagined that everything would drag out until this moment. Had they known that this would happen, the five of them would not have come forward together. Just two or three of them using Cyclone would have cleanly sliced War Without Wounds off the face of the map long ago.

They could only blame the fact that Cyclone's cool-down time was simply too long, which caused them just like most Warriors to prefer saving it for the critical moments. Their frugal mentality had actually caused them to be at a disadvantageous position right now as it had given War Without Wounds the chance to launch his counterattack.

With how long War Without Wounds had been taking their blows, the amount of Rage points he had accumulated was plentiful. As such, the dual-wielded Cyclone shredded the five Warriors until they turned into beams of white light.

Royal God Call did not idle while he was atop the tree. With Brother Assist's Blessing of Strength, he picked targets and fired off arrows as if his life depended on it.

The people under the trees had already fallen into disarray; they feared Sword Demon who came and went like an incorporeal apparition, and they were even more fearful of the devastating spells Gu Fei could release. As for Royal God Call, hardly anyone took note of his shot arrows.

"Don't panic!" Brave Surge hollered while anxiously waving his magic staff about. Water Flower mercenary group lost twenty-five men in the ensuing panic, and they were now down to only thirty men. What was worse was the fact that almost half of these remaining thirty men were Priests that pretty much possessed no combat power.

Gu Fei's burst of spells had since calmed down. Sword Demon had hidden himself in a corner of the forest after his sneak attacks. War Without Wounds had finished off the five Warriors, and the enemy Priests had chosen to not clash with him despite holding numerical superiority. As the forest descended into silence once more, Royal God Call finally located the Archer that that had shot him on the butt previously. "Eat this, you little sh*t!" Royal God Call gritted his teeth and fired off an arrow on Snipe that he had been saving for this.

The arrow screeched through the air and Water Flower lost another player. Only twenty-nine players were left on Water Flower mercenary group's side now.

Chapter 230 - Satisfied amid their Dissatisfaction

From the moment that Brave Surge and his men had entered the forest, he had been moving within Young Master Han's expectations.

Using his fellow mercenaries as bait for Gu Fei to cast AOE spells on the enemies... This was but a small part of his entire scheme. While that gambit might work on the enemies for the first person that fell down, Brave Surge would begin to expect for Gu Fei to cast spells on a bunch of them whenever someone fell down. As a result, he would surely stop any melee job classes from getting near any man that fell down and would choose to have the ranged job classes finish off the target, instead.

It was when Brave Surge had made such a decision that he had thoroughly fallen for Young Master Han's scheme.

The melee job classes dared not to close in on a target, while the ranged job classes' attacks were severely restricted by the forest's terrain. No matter how many ranged job classes Water Flower mercenary group sent, those players' capabilities to fight in this type terrain would certainly be limited. This was the key to Young Master Han's current stratagem.

Using himself as the bait to provide Gu Fei a chance to bombard the enemies to death was the real trap here. This ploy caused Brave Surge to make decisions according to Young Master Han's expectations.

Brave Surge's judgment was not really mistaken. Water Flower would have truly held the advantage in terms of number and would not have lost the match due to such limitations if this had been a conventional fight. Unfortunately for him, Brave Surge and his men were not just facing any average mercenary group today but an elite bunch of men.

Each of the six men of Young Master's Elite displayed eagerness to kill that Water Flower struggled to fend them off and was at a loss on what to do. In the end, even Brave Surge lost his cool upon seeing the messy situation that had unfolded due to his erroneous command – a command that provided Gu Fei an exploitable opportunity.

Twenty-nine men! They only had twenty-nine men left, and they were mostly made up of Priests and Knights, too.

The players who were in charge of dealing damage now had their dream configuration, wherein each of them could have a personal Priest and Knight assisting them. This type of treatment was usually reserved for the strongest players in a group. And yet, despite experiencing the treatment reserved for top experts, not one of them could find it in them to smile.

The forest grew silent once more. Gu Fei, Sword Demon, and Royal God Call stopped attacking the enemies simultaneously. Young Master Han was still hiding behind the tree from before. As for Brother Assist, he was up in the tree. Only War Without Wounds in Young Master's Elite was heroically standing right before the twenty-nine men.

War Without Wounds had been standing in front of the enemies ever since he fell from the tree at the start of the skirmish. But for a reason or two, he was never the one leading their group's assault. War Without Wounds cared not for this, though. Today's PvP had allowed him to enjoy his kills sumptuously, and more importantly, he had gotten a rarely acquired tidy amount of kill points. He always had difficulty earning himself contribution points with Young Master's Elite's configuration. Gu Fei, Sword Demon, and Royal God Call could kill plenty of enemies that earned them a lot of contribution points, while Young Master Han and Brother Assist could earn contribution points even if they did not participate directly in a fight. As for him, he was only able to kill a limited amount of enemies every match. Sword Demon felt pity for him

that he would even give him five points for protecting Young Master Han and Brother Assist.

Such humiliation! It was simply too humiliating for War Without Wounds. He was known as the number one Warrior in many MMOs, yet he was nothing more than a glorified bodyguard in this mercenary group. War Without Wounds had always been looking for a chance to display his skills, and today had been that fated day.

Gu Fei had fortunately saved him at the start; otherwise, he would have long been sent out of the PvP arena by the surrounding enemies. War Without Wounds shuddered at the thought. If he had been killed off just then, he might not even have earned those five contribution points for being a bodyguard. Inadvertently, War Without Wounds disregarded the twenty-nine men before him in his contemplation!

Young Master Han leisurely appeared from behind the tree and chuckled softly at Brave Surge's direction.

Brave Surge laughed as well, albeit with bitterness. He really had no way of dismissing this loss in today's match like how he had done during that previous guild match. Back then, many coincidental occurrences had caused them to feel dissatisfied at the final outcome. Water Flower had been losing this fight today from start to finish, so they had no way of feeling disgruntled about it.

Just as Brave Surge was about to say something, a sudden rustling of leaves sounded from above and the branches and leaves parted to reveal a person that came swooping down to Brave Surge in lightning speed.

The players of Water Flower who clearly witnessed the scene exclaimed, "Oh, there's a rope!"

The Tarzan-like person was none other than Gu Fei. His hand was holding on to a piece of rope that was tied to a part of a tree. When the enemy players saw this, they quickly added two and two together. Recalling Gu Fei's smooth dive from the sky before, they

associated the rope to his previous feat.

“Twin Incineration! Incinerate!” Gu Fei did not swing over for nothing and immediately used his signature move. Having finished replenishing his mana by eating a piece of fruit while atop a tree, he caused a fiery glow resembling a dragon to streak pass the heads of the Water Flower’s remaining men that were marveling over his suspension trick. Four unlucky players happened to be in the path of Gu Fei’s swipe and were unceremoniously insta-killed.

Twenty-five! Water Flower mercenary group only had twenty-five men left.

Gu Fei was not Tarzan, after all, and he did not train in flying from tree to tree like a monkey. Discovering that he had no place to land upon reaching the highest point of his swing, Gu Fei decided to obey the laws of physics and used inertia to swing backward.

This act pissed off the players of Water Flower.

In wuxia novels, sci-fi films, and even the animal kingdom, anyone who utilized such a move would dashingly land himself or herself by a tree on the other side. Who would have thought that Gu Fei would actually have no idea on how to do that and would cowardly swing back when he found no place to land his feet? This sort of swinging motion that would take forever to end seemed like a mockery to them.

The swing was the main prop to project a warm and fuzzy feeling in romantic dramas, yet everyone here was co-starring in an action-packed novel; this was therefore utterly inappropriate! Gu Fei also realized how inconvenient his backward swing was, so he hurriedly lifted his sword and chanted, “Translocation! Blink!”

The good thing about instant-cast spells was that the spell-caster did not need to strike a pose when casting. As long as a Mage wished to do so, he or she could cast it whenever he or she liked.

At the end of his incantation, Gu Fei disappeared from the rope. When the players of Water Flower saw that Gu Fei was no longer idiotically swinging by, they swept their eyes over the surrounding trees to find where he had teleported himself. Suddenly, someone screamed from behind them. Everyone turned to look and saw Gu Fei currently flourishing his sword toward them from behind. It was not just him, though. They did not know when but the Thief had appeared once more and launched an attack on one of them while they were preoccupied.

These two men swiftly killed off two players of Water Flower before each hastily fled to a big tree for cover. Having committed the whole map to his memory, the talented Young Master Han expertly directed them to their current positions that were dead angles for the ranged job classes. Sadly, the directionally challenged Royal God Call could not enjoy Young Master Han's superb guidance and could only pitifully fire off arrows from within the tree branches whenever he could.

Sword Demon who had Stealth and Gu Fei who had Blink proceeded to take two or three enemy lives once more after their respective skills' cool-down time ended before disappearing into the surrounding trees once more.

Royal God Call continued to shoot arrows from above. Meanwhile, War Without Wounds had been standing idly all by himself when he smugly faked charging toward the swiftly decreasing players of Water Flower. This left the enemies literally on edge of mental breakdown. The only thing they managed to gain from all this was a better grasp of the cool-down time for Gu Fei's Blink.

This continued for quite a while. The players of Water Flower could not come up with any good stratagem to counter Young Master's Elite, so they could only helplessly watch their fellow brothers-in-arms fell one by one. When only five men were left of the opposing group, Young Master Han once more revealed

himself from behind the tree and asked Brave Surge with a smile, “Are we done here?”

Brave Surge sighed before he squeezed out a smile. “I’ll see you outside, then!”

Young Master Han nodded his head. Brave Surge and the remaining four players who were mentally drained from everything that had happened silently forfeited the match by voluntarily exiting the PvP arena.

In the semifinals of the mercenary PvP tournament, the six-man group of Young Master’s Elite once more achieved a ‘perfect’ score.

To be able to kill to such a degree... Not only did the exceptionally bountiful experience points and gold rewards please the six men of Young Master’s Elite, the outcome of the match was also beyond satisfactory to them. Nevertheless, they all appeared calm like still water. After all, Brave Surge would be waiting for them outside of this PvP arena!

In the end, they were unable to escape the ensuing pleasantries. Brave Surge was truly intent on lassoing them into the guild and merely stopped short of promising to revere them as if they were his paternal grandfather upon joining the guild.

The skills of these experts to act dumb really shone when it came to this point. Royal God Call acted high and mighty, treating the offer with disdain; War Without Wounds acted humble to the point of being disgusting; Brother Assist remained quiet. Aware of his mediocrity when it came to PvP, he knew that Brave Surge and company were only treating him with deference due to the five others; Sword Demon honestly told them that he was currently not thinking of joining a guild; Young Master Han did not say a word as he was already a member of Carouse; as for Gu Fei, after his fellow mercenaries had expressed their opinions, he merely shrugged his shoulders to Brave Surge and company that were hoping to recruit him the most. His look seemed to say, “I am just

going with the flow.”

Brave Surge also knew that forcing them to join would be useless, so he did not insist further. He merely laughed it off and said, “I’ll wait for the day when we have a chance to work together in the future, then. If you meet with any difficulties in your missions, don’t hesitate to ask for our help!”

Mercenary groups were formed to do business. No matter how indifferent Young Master Han was, he would never reject such good will when offered. Thus, he simply reciprocated the other’s laugh and said, “Since we are familiar with one another, we will naturally help one another in times of need!”

It was quite a unique sight to see people lose a match with such joy. The harmony that permeated before the battle and the general exchanged of good will after the match... This round of the mercenary PvP tournament had ended with much amity.

Chapter 231 - Ultimate Class 3, assemble!

The game of hide-and-seek between Young Master's Elite and Water Flower had proceeded quite slowly, so by the time they got out, the other semifinal matches had already ended. The system-ranked number one mercenary group in Yunduan City, The Black Hand, safely made it to the finals.

With Yunduan City's number one mercenary group, called The Black Hand, pitched against the publicly acknowledged 'dark horse' mercenary group, Young Master's Elite, the finals' outcome was shrouded in 'darkness'. While The Black Hand might be regarded as the top group in Yunduan City, it was a group that mostly accomplished the system-given missions and was unlike the other mercenary groups, such as Four Seas, that were made up of skilled players from big guilds. Now that Young Master's Elite was about to face such a foe, Brother Assist realized how sparse his information about The Black Hand was and hurriedly called his friends and went to the forums to find out more about the opposing group.

Information collection was the one time that Brother Assist felt a sense of belongingness into Young Master's Elite.

No one really cared about the guild versus guild tournament that would occur after. With how guilds would acquire more members every time they leveled up, only the guilds of Traversing Four Seas and Carouse were at level 5 in Yunduan City. Since Carouse was beaten by Amethyst Rebirth long ago, Traversing Four Seas was the only guild with seven hundred fifty members in the guild versus guild tournament. This disparity of two hundred fifty men allowed Traversing Four Seas to easily win the matches against the remaining level 4 guilds with five hundred members.

It was at this point that the system announced: [All the eliminated guilds and mercenary groups in the semifinals will have a match on the last day of Parallel World's event to determine the

third place in the guild versus guild tournament and the mercenary PvP tournament.] Guilds and mercenary groups that were in first place, second place, and third place would be given additional special prizes accordingly, the very same prizes that had a chance to occur during the PvP tournament. As for what the prizes would be... Those would still up to chance.

Furthermore, the tournament finals were not scheduled for tomorrow and were instead set three days later, which happened to be a Saturday. This was one of those rare times that the game officials showed slight compassion for the players. No one would naturally be willing to miss the opportunity to participate in Parallel World's event if he or she could help it, considering that this PvP event had prizes at the end, so the game officials would essentially be making things difficult for the players who had work the next day if they placed it on a weeknight.

All the guilds and mercenary groups in Parallel World were currently anxiously preparing for the final match as none of them wished to miss the chance of bagging the special prizes. Meanwhile, the six men of Young Master's Elite went about their usual activities. This seemingly carefree attitude of theirs was not because of arrogance or undervaluing the prizes, but it was due to the fact that there were only six of them in the group. Compared to a guild like Traversing Four Seas with seven hundred fifty men, it was as easy as eating a meal or drinking water for a group with six men to coordinate with one another.

Today was Thursday; Gu Fei felt quite dispirited when he got online and made his way over to Yunduan City's north gate.

Why was he feeling dispirited? During today's afternoon P.E. lesson, Gu Fei felt a weird vibe from a certain class of students as he stood in front of them. Simply put, they were giving off strong killing intent.

As such, the period ended in an odd note. But before Gu Fei could dismiss the students, over twenty boys and girls suddenly

surrounded him and started to speak all at once.

“Sir, join our guild!”

“Sir, bring us to grind levels!”

“Sir, carry us for quests!”

“Sir, I’m very poor. Give me some money!”

“Sir, do you have any equipment you’re not using?”

Gu Fei felt his head throb with all their shouting. The curiosity of other unrelated students was piqued when they saw Teacher Gu Fei being surrounded by some of them, so they inquired after the matter. Soon after, they began whispering by the side, “Even teacher is playing Parallel World? Maybe, I should give it a try!”

Gu Fei swept his gaze over. Plenty of students here viewed the teachers’ words as Holy Scriptures and would follow their examples to the fullest extent. They were definitely the sort that teachers would usually regard as good students! Right now, he could tell that all these students were about to join Parallel World. If their parents asked, they would probably proudly tell that they were ‘playing the game with Teacher Gu Fei’. How was he going to live that down?

Gu Fei was not afraid of fights, but facing this sort of troublesome matter, which could not be resolved through fighting, he could not help but wish that he could cast Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno in reality. “Alright! Stop!” Gu Fei did not forget his position as a teacher despite all the chattering about the game.

This was the real world, after all. When a teacher got mad, no student would dare make a peep. Gu Fei at least had this effect over this lot of students. “Don’t you have homework at night? What play a game?!” Gu Fei reprimanded them. Although it felt odd to hear such a thing from a P.E. teacher, the students reflexively lowered their heads in shame.

“Run ten laps on the field!” Now that he sounded more like a P.E.

teacher, half of the students balked. The school field's circumference was about four hundred meters, so ten laps would equate to running for four kilometers. That was four times the distance a high school student would have to run in a track-and-field event. The usual track-and-field event for a school's sports meet was about three kilometers, and that was only for students who were very confident of their perseverance and stamina. Four kilometers... Some of the present girls were already shedding tears.

“Sir, please tell us you're joking!” someone moaned.

Of course, Gu Fei was just pulling their legs. The students still had class after this, and it was already late for them to run for about four kilometers, “Just do two laps. Head back to class once you are done.”

The students started running around the field with tears streaming down their cheeks. Gu Fei stood by the side of the track and looked on, not once urging them to speed up.

All the members of the Ultimate Class 3 Guild in Yunduan City were currently running together on the track. Was there a need to explain how this guild came to have such a strong sense of camaraderie and solidarity if one considered what they had to go through together daily?

The students did not need to run too fast since this was not a test, yet no one dared to slow down to trot under Gu Fei's watchful gaze. Just jogging for eight hundred meters was enough to make these students feel worn out. This was especially true for the girls who begged the boys to do an extra lap on their behalf.

Those nosy students had already left, and only the members of Ultimate Class 3 remained standing before Gu Fei. Gu Fei felt slightly moved when he saw the determination in their eyes, so he dismissively told them, “Wait for me by the city gate tonight!”

His sudden change of heart surprised these students for a bit

before they began cheering. Gu Fei's IGN was something that many leaders in Yunduan City had strove to uncover, yet these students had easily found it out due to Ah Fa coming up with it in the first place. After learning of Gu Fei's IGN from Ah Fa, all of them hurriedly checked the Mage leaderboard and found out that Gu Fei was at level 40. Level 40 was a level that these students viewed as extremely high. Be it for entertainment or value purposes, these students resolved to recruit their P.E. teacher into Ultimate Class 3 Guild.

Now that their goal was half achieved, everyone naturally felt elated beyond words. Seeing that Gu Fei was about to leave, Ah Fa, who had been playing the game for long, hurriedly stopped Gu Fei from leaving as he asked a relevant question, "Sir, which gate is that?"

"You really have a lot to say! Go run another lap!" Gu Fei said instead.

"Ahhhh!" Ah Fa was the antithesis of an athlete; just those two rounds from before had left him exhausted, so he knew that running this additional lap would be the death of him.

Still, his question reminded all these students of that fact and they very quickly surrounded Gu Fei to inquire about the specific location, so he had no choice but to arrange to meet them by the north gate.

Gu Fei no longer had a way to escape from them after setting the time and location with his students. Everyone would see one another in reality if they did not meet in-game, so the adage: 'A monk runs away from his responsibilities, yet the temple cannot run with him¹' was extremely applicable to him at the moment.

Gu Fei was holding in such anger right now. He did not stand them up, yet it was his students that were a no-show!

Gu Fei would be cursing and forcing them to call him their father² if they were just any random group of players;

unfortunately, he had his dignity as a teacher to consider since he was facing his students! The point was that he had to exchange it with something else. That was how Gu Fei had stopped himself. If he called himself as their father, it would be very shocking for these students. And yet, it would be a huge problem if they treated him even more casually.

Playing a game with his students? It was such a big no-no.

It was already the agreed upon time, yet the students were nowhere to be seen. Gu Fei patiently waited until each of the students finally came running from the various spawn points.

The reasons they gave were all over the place, as well.

“My mother asked me to do the dishes!”

“My father was playing Minesweeper, so I had to wait a little longer!”

Gu Fei was in tears, as the students’ explanations were so relatable! He thought back to when he had told Sword Demon and the lot that he would log off due to him having classes, and they had regarded him with a strange look on their faces!

Each of the students added Gu Fei as a friend when they arrived. This was yet another opportunity that all the leaders in Yunduan City had missed. That day, from 7 P.M. to 7:17 P.M., Gu Fei patiently accepted all their friend requests.

“Ahem. Line up!” Gu Fei ordered once all the students showed up. Sadly, there was no such item like a whistle in this game. Conducting everyone by merely pointing was just too frivolous for a teacher like himself!

“Come on, teacher. Let’s not do that. It’s so embarrassing!” all the students objected.

Was it more embarrassing than being called ‘teacher’ in the game? Gu Fei was almost in tears, yet he simply could not come up with any way to circumvent this. It was either his real name or his

IGN, and either option would simply be too disrespectful; calling him 'Drunk bro' like what Fireball and others had done was even more awkward than these students calling him 'teacher'. Since Gu Fei was going to feel embarrassed by all this, he might as well make everyone feel the same, so he insisted for the students to line themselves up.

All the students were hesitant, so Gu Fei looked at them solemnly, "Those who do not line themselves up will have to run eight laps during our next lesson."

All the students hastily lined themselves up. Gu Fei nodded his head in satisfaction. There were twenty-four students present, so that made it four lines of six.

"Is our sports representative, here?" Gu Fei scanned the crowd, seeing quite a few students he had not noticed before.

"Nope, sir. Our number is just right. We originally only had twenty-one, but three others joined us after this afternoon lesson. With them included, we now have twenty-four! If we add one more —"

"If we add one more, we will then have five rows. Twenty-one will have three. What do you mean that 'twenty-four' is perfect? Ah Fa, you idiot!" some students rebutted.

Ah Fa was aggrieved! How would he know that they had to stand in line like this in a game? When he said that their number was just right, he was not talking about them lining up.

Meanwhile, Gu Fei was vexed to learn that he had attracted three more students this afternoon. How would he deal with this if this continued?

Chapter 232 - Ultimate Class 3, set off!

Plenty of people were coming and going under the arch of the city's north gate around this time, and the scene of a group of players lining up in four neat rows attracted the attention of many of these passersby. Gu Fei might be standing before them looking all dignified, yet with how he was regarding this group of students, it was apparent that he was trying his best to appear as if he did not know any of them.

“Just what is going on here?” some of the nearby players whispered to one another.

“I don't know!”

“Oh, I know! It's the army! The country finally sent an army into this game. China is beginning to attach importance to MMOs!” someone said excitedly.

“Go to hell! You've read too many YY novels. They are just a bunch of kids; maybe, they are all boy scouts?”

As the onlookers continued to discuss this matter, Gu Fei decided to make this even more awkward and embarrassing for the students. He looked at the team before him and said, “Anyone in the class committee? A class monitor?”

A Warrior from one of the neat rows raised his hand and shouted, “Sir, what's the matter?”

“Since the sports representative isn't here, you will stand in for now! Come out and take lead; we're setting off,” Gu Fei replied.

Wow! Teacher is pretty crafty for delegating such an embarrassing thing to me! The class monitor was about to faint. Doing this sort of thing in reality was naturally, yet doing it in a game was extremely embarrassing.

“Hurry up! Don't dawdle. Are you having fun making a spectacle in front of everyone?” Gu Fei urged.

This situation naturally embarrassed all the present students to the point of wanting to dig a hole for them to hide in. Now that they were given a way to escape the curious onlookers, they hatefully glared at their class monitor for hesitating and told him, “Get it over with!”

The class monitor could feel tears streaming down his cheeks as he said aloud, “Turn to your left and jog!”

All the students synchronized their steps and jogged out of Yunduan’s north gate amid the crowd’s sighs of awe upon witnessing the scene.

“Stay in neat formation when you’re jogging. Why aren’t you shouting your ‘slogan’?” Gu Fei pointed out from behind.

“Spare us, sir!” All the students cried out. The ‘slogan’ that Gu Fei was referring to was of course the ‘one, two, three, four’ cry that they would shout whenever they jogged in an orderly fashion like this. It seemed that they no longer had any way of getting out of this without drawing the attention of everyone around them. Shouting that line was truly embarrassing and attention-grabbing, so everyone began to think to themselves, Was approaching teacher in the game a mistake?

“Fine. Just a simple chant in cadence will do. All your steps are in a mess. Class monitor!” Gu Fei shouted.

“One, two! One, two!” the class monitor helplessly called out as he became filled with misery internally. It seemed that being a class monitor was a mistake, as well.

Heading out from one of the city gates, the students met players along the way no matter which direction they chose to jog. The actions of the students were rigid, and they jogged in sync with one another, yet their heads hunkered lower and lower the more they ran, looking like a troop of headless corpse moving together from afar.

This continued on for an undetermined amount of time until they found themselves in a somewhat desolate and sparsely populated area. Some of the students felt baffled as it had been a long time since they heard anything from their teacher.

They turned their heads backward and saw that Gu Fei was about two hundred meters away from them, leisurely pacing behind them as they jogged in the wilderness outside of Yunduan City. All the students stopped jogging and waited for their teacher to catch up.

“Why are you stopping?! You all can’t just stop unless I tell you to do so. Continue!” There were no outsiders around them now, so Gu Fei immediately took charge of commanding them.

The students continued onward as Gu Fei monitored their pace just like in the class, waiting for them to coordinate their movements perfectly before calling them to stand at attention.

“Are we there yet?” Gu Fei asked.

“What does teacher mean by ‘there’?” the students asked, baffled.

“If we’re not there yet, why are you all stopping?” Gu Fei asked.

The students looked at one another, “Where ARE we going?”

“How will I know where you all are going?” Gu Fei retorted.

All the students suddenly felt lightness overcome them. They had done all this for nothing! Gu Fei had already found himself a scapegoat for this, “Class monitor, where are you bringing the class to?”

The class monitor was already in tears, swearing to himself that he would drag the sports representative into the game once he returned to reality. In the meantime, he could only say, “I don’t know. I’ve been leading them out here blindly. I’m not even familiar with this map! Oh, that’s right. We should let Ah Fa take the lead. He has been playing the game for the longest, so he

should be the most familiar with Yunduan City's terrain!" The class monitor had a 'eureka' moment when he realized he needed not to drag the sports representative in the game when they had a savior right here.

Ah Fa was speechless. No one usually paid attention to him, yet they always called for him whenever they were in trouble. He was pretty much the most reluctant guild leader in all of Yunduan City.

Gu Fei did not dwell on this problem for long and just continued to ask, "Then, what did you look for me today for?"

"Sir, join our guild!"

"Sir, bring us to grind levels!"

"Sir, carry us for quests!"

"Sir, I'm very poor. Give me some money!"

"Sir, do you have any equipment you're not using?"

It was the exactly same questions that they had mentioned this afternoon.

"Alright, calm down!" Gu Fei shouted to get everyone to stop, saying, "Guild? Teacher is already in one; grinding? Teacher usually grinds alone; quests? There are many of you here, so there's no way I can carry you all; money? Teacher still owes someone 1800 gold coins; as for equipment, I have some, so I'll give them to you guys once we head back!"

"Yay!" the students cheered. They felt very happy at having achieved one out of their five terms, and it was the most important term, too.

"Now disperse. Do whatever you want. Meet at the north gate when it's 9 P.M.," Gu Fei waved his hands to dismiss them.

"Ah, wait! Don't go off just yet!" Ah Fa hurriedly leaped out from the group. As everyone stared at him, he explained, "I have a quest."

“Oh. Ah Fa can stay. The rest of you may leave!” Gu Fei changed his order.

“No, don’t! It’s a guild quest,” Ah Fa hurriedly added.

Guild quest... Gu Fei wrinkled his brows. He had experienced a guild quest before, and it was when he had teamed up with June’s Rain. What ensued was an absolutely vexing matter that turned him from being the hunter to becoming the hunted, from him against a city of players to him being part of a city-wide battle. He recalled that that was perhaps the only time he had experienced the most bloodshed and slaughter.

As Gu Fei recalled all this, Ah Fa briefed everyone about the guild quest. Gu Fei listened in and got the gist of it. It seemed that the quest was about vanquishing a band of Brigands. Besides requiring them to kill one hundred enemies, they apparently had to capture the leader alive as well.

Besides Ah Fa, the other members of Ultimate Class 3 Guild only started playing Parallel World after its official release. Since they barely had time to play the game, being middle school students and all, their levels were pitifully low as well. Naturally, the leader of this band of Brigands was a Boss. Given how poorly equipped their guild was, Ah Fa knew that challenging the Boss was nearly impossible for them. With the help of a level 40 Mage like Gu Fei, they might achieve a satisfactory outcome in this guild quest.

“Oh? Boss?” Gu Fei perked up when he heard this. To him, fighting with players was as difficult as taking on the average monsters. Perhaps, a Boss in the game would be a better match for him. Gu Fei recalled his fight with the Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto. Although his method of attack was systematic, Gu Fei at least had to be more cautious and alert when facing him. That was a level of tension he did not often feel. “Where is he? Take me there!”

“This way!” Ah Fa prepared to lead the way.

“Gather up, everyone. Ah Fa is leading the way!” Gu Fei shouted.

Not many people were out here, so the students did not feel uncomfortable to line up once more. They hurriedly returned into their respective rows as Ah Fa led everyone onward with renewed spirit, immensely enjoying the whole process. Why would he not be when he had such a prominent role before everyone?

The group made its way to a certain valley. This area was part of Yunxia Valley, yet it was not frequented by people to grind levels. Some players were around, so the Ultimate Class 3’s uniformed arrival attracted these people’s attention and they all stopped what they were doing to watch the strange procession.

The students were focused on their guild quest, so they currently did not care about the strangers’ attention. They could already see their quest target in sight when they entered the valley in neat rows. The guild quest had two parts: first was to kill one hundred Brigands and second was to capture the leader alive.

“Sir, we’ll leave the Boss to you!” The students expected a lot from Gu Fei. This was normal in MMOs; players usually admired those with higher level than themselves until they reached that same level and no longer held the level in high regard. Right now, these students were looking up to their teacher who had a higher level than themselves....

“Sir, you can also help us with the Brigands, but please don’t kill them! Or else, the result won’t be counted in our quest progress.”

Gu Fei was not a member of Ultimate Class 3, so he did not have the guild quest in his quest log. Any target he killed would only provide him experience and would of course not be included in the kill count of Ultimate Class 3’s guild quest.

“Sir, please cast Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno. Let us see it in action!” Ah Fa was looking forward to this spell as he was currently only at level 34. He needed to reach level 36 before he could learn that spell.

“Lure the monsters first!” Gu Fei did not mind displaying his prowess before these students. Of course, he did not use his Moonlit Nightfalls as this group had requested him to not kill the monsters.

Although these students were young and had low levels, their gaming skills were at least way better than most of the Amethyst Rebirth ladies. While quite a number of them were girls, their coordination was better in almost every aspect than the Amethyst Rebirth ladies after spending many long hours in school and in the game with one another.

Gu Fei had also been spending considerable time every day in the company of top-tier experts inside Parallel World, so his discerning eyes had improved greatly. He could tell that he would have an easier time carrying his students than the Amethyst Rebirth ladies!

Two students that were Archers ran out to pull the monsters over as the rest glanced over at Gu Fei.

Gu Fei calmly pointed his finger forward and chanted, “Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno! Arise!”

“Ah, sir! Why are you using it on us?!” The two students in charge of luring the monsters were momentarily stunned and they started to run left and right in panic.

“Hey! Don’t run off like that!” Gu Fei fumed. Each of them ran left and right respectively, pulling the monsters to two separate directions. Gu Fei had to preemptively cast his spell due to the slow casting time he had. Had the two students continued forward, those monsters would have stepped perfectly into the Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno’s AOE; instead, what resulted from this pull was a mess.

The students heard Gu Fei finish his incantation, yet did not see the spell spring forth, which caused them to feel boundlessly disappointed. By the time the two pulled the monsters to the left and right, the raging inferno’s explosion had just sounded.

Naturally, not one Brigand was burned off by it.

The students were no experts, so they failed to notice the finer details in this scene. They only thought that Gu Fei's spell was cast off-target, immediately causing them to chatter about.

“Ah Fa, is teacher even good?” someone softly asked Ah Fa. Ah Fa was after all the most knowledgeable person among them all.

“Uhm... He's okay, I guess...” Ah Fa was also uncertain himself!

Chapter 233 - The Perfect Match

That awesome image the students had of Gu Fei in their minds wavered slightly due to what they deemed as him casting ‘off-target’. Gu Fei naturally did not know of their thoughts and merely pointed to Ah Fa the Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno spell that had not managed to burn off even one monster, “See that?”

When Ah Fa nodded his head, Gu Fei waved his hand toward all the students, “Go and fight the monsters!”

This was how the operation ‘exterminate the Brigands’ officially began. Gu Fei did not idle. Confident that his Spell Damage could not insta-kill any of the monsters without his sword, he would occasionally cast a few spells to help everyone.

It was fine if he did not provide them assistance, but everyone’s heart chilled further when he did.

Some of the slightly knowledgeable students toward gaming saw that the monsters Gu Fei had struck were unfazed by his spells and thoroughly assumed that Gu Fei’s Spell Damage was average.

Since Ah Fa had the greatest gaming knowledge among the students, he could see this most clearly. As a fellow Mage, he even estimated that Teacher Gu Fei’s Spell Damage was lower than his.

It was not just that, though. Gu Fei would retreat to the side, fished out fruit from his dimensional pocket, and munched on it every few spells he cast. His smooth actions signified that this was something he was very used to doing. A Mage’s mana would only deplete this quickly if it was low to begin with. Only one reason could cause this, and that was not adding points to Intelligence. A Mage that had low Intelligence was no better than trash... There was no need to argue over this fact. No matter what type of character a Mage was currently building, it was impossible for him or her to disregard Intelligence.

Ah Fa continued to fight a few Brigands as he moved toward Gu Fei who was currently eating an apple, feebly asking, “Sir, how did you allocate your stat points?”

“I’ve put them all into Agility,” Gu Fei answered.

Ah Fa nearly coughed up blood when he heard this; the word ‘trash’ was on the tip of his tongue and he forcefully swallowed it down. Pausing for a bit, he stiltedly asked, “Why?”

“What do you mean ‘why’?”

“Why are you putting all your points to Agility?”

“To increase my speed!” Gu Fei answered.

“Speed...” Ah Fa muttered to himself. He could not think of a reason for a Mage to value speed to the point of forgoing Intelligence. Just as he was about to ask for more details, Gu Fei suddenly cried out, “Behind you!” He then tossed his half-eaten apple over to a student.

A student somehow lost track of the Brigand he was fighting and stood there in a daze, not knowing that the Brigand had already gotten behind him. The half-eaten apple Gu Fei had thrown struck the said student’s head and cleared his muddle-headedness. At the same time, the student registered Gu Fei’s warning and quickly turned around with the weapon in his hand held horizontally, blocking the incoming attack of the Brigand.

The other students around him rushed to give him a hand and they very quickly dispatched the Brigand. Gu Fei nodded his head approvingly when he saw the students helping one another. At the same time, he told Ah Fa who was beside him, “Go and help them fight the monsters! You’re the strongest among them, so why are you just standing here?”

Ah Fa kept the question he had and joined the skirmish once more.

The operation progressed smoothly with everyone’s united

effort. All counted the monsters they still needed to kill to fulfill the quest requirement.

“Two more left!”

“Only one more now!”

Ah Fa inhaled a sharp breath. The Brigand leader had yet to reveal itself. Perhaps, the second part of the quest would only be triggered after they killed all the one hundred Brigands for this first part? Thinking that they would have to depend on Gu Fei now, Ah Fa’s heart beat with trepidation. He sneaked a glance at Gu Fei as another spell was unleashed.

“One hundred!” everyone cheered.

Gu Fei, who had not provided much help throughout this process, became highly vigilant at this moment. He came to the same conclusion as Ah Fa that the Brigand leader would only appear after the first part of the quest was completed.

Once the one hundredth Brigand fell down, he did not remain motionless like the others; instead, this Brigand reached into his waist and threw something in the air.

A piercing sound was heard as the thrown object soared through the clouds. Only then did the Brigand fall to the ground and die. All the students looked at the direction that the flare had disappeared to with restless hearts. No matter how strong the Brigand leader was, there was no way for him to fall from the sky, so Gu Fei focused his eyes on the deeper part of the valley, instead.

In no time at all, they heard the heavy sound of footsteps coming from within the valley. The students were quite shaken when they heard this thudding sound. No matter how they put it, this was not the sound anyone would expect from just one person!

“Melee job classes, quickly move to the front! Priests, head to the back. Archers and Mages, get to either side!” Ah Fa commanded his fellow classmates to face the enemies in his panic. Gu Fei, at this

point, imposingly stepped forward and told the students, “All of you, retreat to the side.”

“Ah?” The students exchanged baffled looks. Gu Fei already had his back to them as he stuck his hand inside his dimensional pocket. He intended to face these marching enemies alone.

“Sir!” Ah Fa quickly ran to him, “There seems to be many enemies!”

“Yup. That’s why you guys should retreat to the side!” Gu Fei said.

The one hundred Brigands before did not actually appear before the students all at once. In actuality, every wave was only consisted of ten Brigands, so the members of Ultimate Class 3 were able to slowly accumulate the kill count of one hundred. The sound traveling from the valley right now seemed to be made of over a hundred Brigands charging toward them together. If this final wave truly had these many Brigands, Ultimate Class 3 would have no way of successfully completing the guild quest. Ah Fa was being far too optimistic for hoping that they would not face many enemies all at once.

The closer the sound was, the clearer it became. It seemed that the sound of heavy footfalls was not being falsely echoed by the valley’s walls, and what they were hearing was truly the sound of actual footsteps.

When the figures from deep within the valley became distinguishable, Ah Fa’s face grew deathly pale. Extending his hand out, he frantically ordered, “Run! Everyone, quickly RUN!”

Ah Fa was a leader that was used to being ordered by everyone, yet at times like this, he was still the person in charge of the guild and was the most knowledgeable when it came to gaming among them, so none of his classmates questioned his judgment and immediately tried to escape from the valley. The students ran for quite a distance before remembering something. They looked

backward and saw that Gu Fei had not moved from his original position.

“Sir!” all the students anxiously called out to Gu Fei.

Gu Fei’s full focus was already on the mob of Brigands that were rushing toward them. Encountering such a large pack of monsters to grind on was rare for players. Even if they intentionally lured the monsters together, the density of the monsters before Gu Fei would still far exceed those. In fact, no one would attempt to lure these many monsters all at once. Gu Fei had instinctively felt that he might have to kill such a huge pack of monsters for this stage of the quest, so he was beside himself with joy. He had actually heard Ah Fa’s call to flee, but he had never once considered that option.

Gu Fei glanced at the students who were currently calling for him and nodded his head in satisfaction when he saw that all of them were standing twenty meters away from him, “Yup. That’s far enough. Stay there.”

“No way?” The students looked at one another in disbelief. They could tell that Gu Fei did not intend to retreat and seemed to be even looking forward to taking on the huge mob of Brigands.

At this time, Gu Fei pulled out his Moonlit Nightfalls. Ah Fa’s eyes shone brightly as he could tell from the sword’s aura that Gu Fei was holding on to top-grade equipment. “Teacher wasn’t using that weapon before...” Ah Fa was finally realizing that Gu Fei must not have used the sword earlier to avoid killing off the monsters. Could it be that teacher’s Spell Damage is actually high enough to insta-kill these Brigands? Ah Fa’s mouth was agape from thinking of this possibility, not knowing that he had made the right conjecture.

The other students did not know what they should be doing right now, so they could only wait for Ah Fa, the most experienced gamer among them, to make a decision.

“Let’s wait and see how this goes.” Seeing Gu Fei’s confident

look, Ah Fa wondered if his teacher truly possessed the ability to insta-kill these Brigands. If he did, then killing these large mobs would not just be a dream!

Holding his Moonlit Nightfalls with a reverse-grip, the students saw Gu Fei take the initiative to meet the Brigands. Ah Fa grew anxious when he saw that Gu Fei had not cast a AOE spell and had merely sprinted toward the mob of Brigands, eventually plunging himself right into their midst.

“Teacher... Did he want to commit suicide?” the students asked, baffled.

It was at this point that battlecries rang through the air!

The Brigands were full of vigor, but more importantly, Parallel World’s full-immersion system had not coded them to shout until their throats were sore. Still, merely having these Brigands fight the players was boring, so the game designers had each of them howl every time they went to battle to add flavor to the monotonous atmosphere, pleasantly terming this as ‘sound effect’.

Gu Fei swung his sword forward with Twin Incineration, insta-killing four Brigands. His main intention for doing this was to draw the Brigands’ aggro, so that they would ignore the students behind him and focus solely on him.

His plan worked; Mages’ spells had higher aggro compared to other job classes’ attacks, so Gu Fei’s one swipe caused the entire mob of Brigands to surround him. Gu Fei had not felt flustered since he had already fought the Brigands in Yunxia Valley many times in the past. He was very familiar with their attack patterns, and the system had yet to change those even now. Therefore, unless he made a mistake or lose his concentration during the fight, the Brigands right now would be unable to injure Gu Fei.

Gu Fei did not wish to fight with this bunch of robots for long, so he extended his sword and pointed toward his feet, “Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno! Arise!”

It would take some time before his spell would fully materialize, and the good thing about the system's dumb monsters was that they would never try to avoid Gu Fei's spell despite hearing the incantation and would still single-mindedly throw themselves at Gu Fei.

The Brigands tightly surrounded him without a gap. Gu Fei's left hand lifted Moonlit Nightfalls, while his right hand pulled out the Chinese broadsword, defending against the Brigands' attacks as he counted down the seconds in his head. It's about time! Gu Fei said to himself. Randomly pointing to somewhere outside the encirclement, he said, "Translocation! Blink!"

The students all thought that Gu Fei had lost his life when they saw him get surrounded by the throng of Brigands. Ah Fa lost all hopes of Gu Fei being able to extricate himself and was about to call everyone to leave when the air before his eyes distorted and Gu Fei's figure appeared outside the mobs' encirclement. At the same time, Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno flared to life at the heart of the throng of Brigands and set them ablaze.

The throng of Brigands that the system had spawned for this quest was still stuck in that tight encirclement Gu Fei had found himself before. They moved and struggled to orientate themselves to where Gu Fei had appeared, their movements perfectly matching the dancing flames of Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno.

Flames crackled on amid the deaths of all the Brigands. Gu Fei returned the weapons inside his dimensional pocket and walked toward the students while casually dusting his hands off together, "Alright! That's it for today. Lesson's over!"

Chapter 234 - Faking the Surrender

The students were deeply shaken by what they had just witnessed and were speechless for the longest time.

The fire was still burning brightly behind him when Gu Fei yelled out, “Everyone, gather. It’s time to return to the city!”

The students ran toward Gu Fei and lined themselves up. Those who had a better understanding of the game, including Ah Fa, were even more baffled by Gu Fei’s recent display of power. Under the others’ exclamations of awe for Gu Fei, Ah Fa reminded his teacher, “Sir, the mission requires for us to capture the Brigand leader alive.”

“Capture alive? How do we do that?” Gu Fei was slightly taken aback. He suddenly saw the students’ faces looking horrified as one of them hurriedly screamed, “SIR, WATCH OUT!” His warning came a little too late, though, as this Boss, just like any other Bosses in MMOs, possessed extraordinarily fast speed than the average monsters.

While Gu Fei’s Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno insta-killed all the normal Brigands, the Brigand leader managed to survive his attack. The Brigand leader sprinted out of the raging inferno and charged toward Gu Fei who was busy organizing his students. Gu Fei was holding the monster’s aggro, so the Brigand leader aimed its saber toward him and struck.

The way the NPCs and monsters in Parallel World were programmed might be drab and rigid, but none of them would emit killing intent! Killing intent was something that the game was able to replicate due to its system being able to fully simulate the complexities of the human body. NPCs and monsters were entirely made up of data and numbers, so something like killing intent naturally did not exist in their formatting.

The sound of burning flames behind Gu Fei perfectly masked the

footfalls of the Brigand leader. By the time the students managed to alert Gu Fei of the incoming attack, the Brigand leader's saber had already connected to Gu Fei's waist and had sent him flying outward.

"Sir!" the students exclaimed. Of course, they had Priests among them, and many of them scrambled to bestow Heal on Gu Fei. No matter how powerful the Boss was, its basic attack could not insta-kill a player. Under the students' quick administration of Heal, Gu Fei was able to recover from his critical condition and get himself back to his feet.

"Quickly dodge!" Ah Fa shouted.

"Dodge what?" Gu Fei used the side of the cliff to support himself, his face wearing a calm expression as he held Moonlit Nightfalls aloft.

Heal and other non-offensive skills could still attract the monsters' aggro based on their properties. In fact, casting this sort of skills would garner the monsters' aggro across a wide area, so in any normal situation, the Priests' constant usage of Heal would lure nearby monsters toward them. As for this Brigand leader's aggro, it was still focused on Gu Fei, proving that Gu Fei's Spell Damage was extremely high. Considering how any target that he slashed would usually be insta-killed, maintaining this Boss's aggro was an easy task.

The Brigand leader rushed toward Gu Fei in large strides and moved to slash him once more. To these students, the monster's slash was fast and vicious that it seemed capable of cleaving their teacher in half. They quickly bestowed Heal on to Gu Fei, yet he actually sidestepped to let the attack pass by. With a flip of his hand, he chanted a familiar incantation and a flaming arc flowed past the Brigand leader's head.

The two of them kept hacking at each other like this. At first, the students were somewhat worried for Gu Fei and occasionally called

out, “Sir, be careful!” The Priests were even more nervous and they would tremblingly bestow Heal on Gu Fei every time they saw the Brigand leader’s saber come near him. The melee job classes wished to lend Gu Fei a hand, but the fight’s fast tempo did not give them any opportunities to step in. The ranged job classes feared that they instead would accidentally shoot Gu Fei with how near the Brigand leader was to their teacher.

Ironically, the calmest individual in the whole group was actually the one doing the fighting. The Brigand leader had only managed to score a hit on Gu Fei before because it had not emitted any killing intent. Now that Gu Fei was fighting it head on, he was not at a disadvantage in the least. The Brigand leader’s attack patterns were similar to any normal Brigand, except that its every blow was stronger, moves were faster, and damage was higher; this Brigand leader did not seem to have any unique or weird new skill in its arsenal.

Despite that, Gu Fei remained vigilant for any change to the situation. Based on his experience facing the Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto in the past, all Bosses should have an ultimate move that could turn the tide of a fight in their favor.

Gu Fei kept blocking, but the Brigand leader never once unleashed an ultimate move, causing his heart to be filled with confusion.

On the students’ end, their emotions had long since settled. The Priests were no longer nervously bestowing Heal on Gu Fei, while the other job classes no longer strove to lend him a hand. Even Ah Fa changed his words to: “Sir, slow down! Don’t cut him down! We need him alive. Alive!”

“How do I capture him alive?” Gu Fei asked, somewhat frustrated. He really hated holding back.

“The mission did not mention this!” Ah Fa was shocked! Although the quest required for them to capture the Brigand leader

alive, it never stated how it could be accomplished or the condition that would make the Boss surrender to them.

“Should we find some rope to tie him up?” The students began to discuss possible solutions for this problem.

“Knock him out!”

“But none of us knows Bludgeon!” The Thieves exclaimed. The skill could only be acquired by them at level 36, but even the highest level player in Ultimate Class 3, which was Ah Fa, was only at level 34.

Gu Fei, who was exchanging blows with the Boss, felt that its movement somehow slackened. Gu Fei’s mana had long been used up, which was why this fight with the Brigand leader had lasted for a long time. The Boss would have long been dead had he been able to cast Twin Incineration.

Gu Fei no longer wanted to drag the fight further, so he aimed to stab the enemy. It was at this point that the Brigand leader suddenly knelt on the ground and announced his surrender.

“Oh! So this is how we capture him alive!” The students exclaimed in joy as they began to chatter among themselves once more.

Gu Fei found it rather comical. Since he no longer had to stab the Brigand leader, he merely kept his sword to his side, addressing Ah Fa, “Does this work for you?”

Ah Fa happily nodded his head, “The mission will be completed once we bring him back and hand him over to Yunduan City’s NPC prison.”

Gu Fei nodded his head. Just as he was about to say something, the kneeling Brigand leader suddenly sprang up, took out a huge bronze saber, and slid it over to Gu Fei with a twist of his hand.

This brutal strike was extremely quick, and Gu Fei was slightly taken aback by it. Thankfully, his reaction speed was not lacking;

the sword he was holding to his side flew over horizontally and blocked the sneak attack in the nick of time.

The Brigand leader did not pull his saber back once it clashed with Gu Fei's; instead, the Boss deviated from its usual attack pattern by continuing to press the saber down toward Gu Fei's chest. Gu Fei used his two hands to support the blade that was blocking the Brigand leader's saber, yet he was still unable to stop the pressure being exerted on him. In the end, it hit him right on to his chest.

Gu Fei's HP began to diminish at a rapid rate. To make matters worse, force was continuously being applied on the saber. The Brigand leader showed no signs of relenting, as if he intended to drag Gu Fei down to the grave with him.

Gu Fei tried to beat a hasty retreat, yet the Boss chased after him to continue pressuring him. The Boss's strength was astonishing. Gu Fei no longer had any other trick up his sleeve to extricate himself from this quandary now that he had taken the route of matching his Strength with the Boss's. Eventually, Gu Fei found himself back against the valley's rocky hillslope. His back was leaning on the cliff face even as he put his all into pushing the saber away with his sword. Meanwhile, the Brigand leader did not show even the slightest intention to loosen the pressure on him.

This sucks! Gu Fei's heart was in distress. He had always been prepared for the Boss to use some sort of ultimate skill, yet he had never expected that its ultimate move would begin with its fake surrender. Which m*th*r*f*ck*ng designer came up with this?! Gu Fei cursed internally. He was unable to think of any method to get out of this. Strength was his weakest stat as a Mage. Right now, he had no means to withstand the Brigand leader's force and his HP continued to drop rapidly. Was there any way for him to escape this predicament?

Fortunately, Gu Fei was not fighting alone!

The students who were lost in a daze, returned to their senses upon realizing their teacher's precarious situation. Seeing that Gu Fei was being pressed against the base of the cliff, all of them hurriedly assisted him. Those that could Heal did so, and those that could fight attacked the Brigand leader; each of them did their best without a care for their safety.

The Brigand leader once more displayed the one-track mentality that the system had programmed into it. Ignoring the flood of arrows, daggers, axes, swords, and other weapons that landed on its back, the Boss continued to push Gu Fei against the rockface.

Gu Fei was utterly dumbfounded by this Boss's tenacity. Under the Priests' support, Gu Fei's HP was once more saved from the brink of depletion.

No matter how hard the Brigand tried, it was no longer a threat to Gu Fei. With the students' attacks peppering its back, it was only a matter of time before this fight tilt back in their favor.

Gu Fei persisted as the Priests kept on healing him and the others continued to attack the Boss as best as they could. The Brigand leader finally depleted its strength and stumbled on to the ground.

Gu Fei no longer dared to be careless this time. He consumed a piece of fruit to replenish his mana before carefully approaching the Boss's body. His sword poked and his feet prodded. Seeing that the Brigand leader was no longer moving to counterattack, he glanced at the surrounding students. He still had doubts in his mind, so he asked Ah Fa, "Think we're good now?" When it came to gaming matters, Gu Fei was unsure if he was any better than his students.

Although Ah Fa was quite knowledgeable about MMOs, he was actually worse than Gu Fei when it came to this fully immersive game. He hemmed and hawed, unsure of how to answer his question. In the end, it was the other low-level students that dared to come forward to tie the Brigand leader like a rice dumpling¹

with a rope that they got somewhere. Since they had low levels, it would not be too much of a loss if they lost a level from dying. The Brigand leader did not react throughout this process. Everyone sighed in relief when the deed was done and finally considered today's quest as accomplished.

Two students, who had picked the Warrior job class, came forward to lift up the now bounded Brigand leader like luggage. Following this, the students happily began to make their way back to the city. Even Gu Fei, who had nearly been killed a few times, perked up and yelled at the students to neatly line themselves up like before.

It was as if Gu Fei had rained on their parade as the elated students instantly seemed to look half a head shorter. However, none of them dared to disobey the teacher's order and they could only obediently form up the neat rows, making their way back to Yunduan City under Ah Fa's cadence of: "One, two! One, two!"

Unbeknown to them, some people were quietly waiting for their arrival by the entrance to the valley.

Chapter 235 - Competitive Quest

The members of Ultimate Class 3 Guild proceeded to the valley's entryway in an orderly fashion. The lack of any onlookers made them feel less embarrassed and caused their jubilation at capturing the Brigand leader to gradually rise. Gu Fei smiled wryly to himself, They are just a bunch of kids through and through; making them feel awkward is really not easy!

Along the way, they encountered a party that was heading inside the valley.

This party of twenty-seven players felt somewhat intimidated by Ultimate Class 3's high form of discipline, which was displayed through the neat rows of students marching in unison. Moments later, these twenty-seven men saw that two Warriors among Gu Fei's group were carrying a tightly bound Boss, causing the men's expression to become somewhat unnatural.

"So that's how it is," all of them furtively whispered to one another.

Among these twenty-seven men, four were regarding the disciplined procession with stiff upper lips. They did not display any emotion on their faces at the sight of the bound Brigand leader; each of them seemed to have readily accepted this truth and was merely surprised by the students' orderly lines.

Teams that had discipline would definitely be able to fight better, which was particularly important in a group PvP. 'Discipline' was not how people called it in MMOs, though; instead, people would say that the players in a group had 'excellent teamwork' – teamwork that was derived from the the tacit understanding the players had formed with one another. It was easy for three or five individuals to cultivate this understanding with one another, but it was highly difficult for a group of thirty, fifty, or even one hundred players to have such strong bond and understanding.

Such level of rapport would have to be nurtured over time and be forcefully changed from good understanding into a form of discipline.

Achieving discipline in a group was undoubtedly a very agonizing matter. Entertainment was the core of MMOs, so few people would want to be under strict rules or discipline. Therefore, seeing such a team that showed high level of discipline was truly astonishing. Such a team will most likely have high combat might, everyone subconsciously thought.

Fortunately, there was a way to check the actual combat strength of a player in-game: Appraisal skill. Each of these twenty-seven players chose a target and appraised him or her. What they saw next gave them the biggest shock of their lives.

This team did not even have a player above level 35. Furthermore, this bunch of players showed listless expression on their faces at the sight of the twenty-seven men. Their steps became lackadaisical and their neat marching suddenly became somewhat disorderly. This was a given, though, as the students felt embarrassed to continue walking in neat rows upon seeing the presence of others.

Quite a few of the twenty-seven men expressed glee at this. As the team of students brushed past them on their way out of the valley, the twenty-seven men looked at one another questioningly. Finally, someone addressed the four calm men among them, “Are we still doing it?”

Someone from the four men replied, “You guys can decide this for yourselves! But since you guys have picked up a competitive quest, the reward we have originally discussed will be doubled. This can be considered as a PvP, so the potential cost for this upcoming clash will be added to the total.”

“We know that.” The person who had asked the question nodded his head in acknowledgement. He turned to his twenty-two

companions to discuss the matter first before saying to the four, “But... These guys don’t really look strong. Perhaps, we won’t need your help....”

The four merely chuckled at this before saying, “They indeed seem quite weak. But even if we don’t lend you guys a hand in this fight, the deposit you’ve paid won’t be refunded. We’ll simply waive the remaining fee that was originally agreed on. We hope you understand that.”

“Of course, we do!” The man nodded his head once more, “However—”

“We will stay here. If you guys ever need our help, we will immediately come to your aid. Does that work for you?” The four players had already seen through these men’s intention and gave them the most satisfying answer. The man did not speak further and just turned his head over to his twenty-two companions to exchange a few more words. The twenty-three men silently took out their weapons and initiated their sneak attack on to the back of someone from Ultimate Class 3.

The Archers’ arrows were the first to arrive by a target. They targeted the last person walking behind the opposing guild.

Unexpectedly, that person swiftly pivoted as he pulled out a sword from within his dimensional pocket. A few waves of his sword swatted off the arrows heading his way. “What are you guys doing?” Gu Fei had long since felt that something was not right with these twenty odd men. He would have dodged the incoming arrows, which was the safest move for him, had he not been worried that they would hit his students, instead. Hence, he had chosen to risk injuring himself by blocking the arrows. Thankfully, none of the enemy Archers had used a skill in their attacks, so the four arrows that had been shot were easily deflected by him. These men seemed to have deemed it wasteful to use powerful skills to assassinate a mere Mage like him.

A black robe and a dark purple sword... His attire quickly grabbed the four men's attention. Although this was the first time they had seen this getup for themselves, it had actually been the hot topic in Yunduan City and within their group.

This person was the Mage of Young Master's Elite: Thousand Miles Drunk. He was the one opponent The Black Hand had focused most of its attention on since their mercenary group would be facing him and the rest of Young Master's Elite in the finals of the mercenary PvP tournament.

These four men were relieved once they identified Gu Fei, as things began to make sense. They had originally been somewhat surprised that this group of below level 35 players had managed to take down a Boss. By the looks of things, this party had hired a mercenary group to help it. However, Young Master's Elite had only sent out one person... This clearly showed that that mercenary group truly possessed indomitable strength!

The students with Gu Fei were in an uproar when they became aware of the situation that they were currently in.

"We're really sorry; we took up a competitive quest," someone among the twenty-three men gave this simple explanation.

Competitive quest... Gu Fei had heard of this term before. According to Brother Assist, the system would design certain content in the game as a competitive quest, so that players could take up opposing sides and pit themselves against one another for a reward. In a competitive quest, the players were no longer fighting with the system but with other players like themselves. Most competitive quests were for guilds or mercenary groups; rarely was there this competitive element to solo content.

"What's the completion condition for your quest?" Gu Fei asked. Since they were all doing quests, there really was no way to say who was in the right or wrong. It was therefore best to find a peaceful resolution for this.

“To kill off the Brigand leader while he is being escorted,” the opposing team replied. As a small guild, they were not confident to face off against a Boss by themselves for this quest, so they quickly contacted The Black Hand, the largest mercenary group in Yunduan City, for aid.

The Black Hand had become a reputable mercenary group among the players, so its credibility was more or less guaranteed. Most people would not go to the Hall of Mercenaries to set a mission when looking for external aid. Although it was safer to go through the system and create missions, players would then stumble into the system’s unavoidable ‘intermediary fee’. Thus, most players would be more than happy to make a private deal with a mercenary group as long as its credibility was proven.

The two parties had easily agreed on a price and a deposit had quickly been passed from one hand to another. Following this, players from both sides gathered by one of the city gates and headed toward the system-provided coordinates to complete the mission. Very soon after, they caught sight of Gu Fei and the members of Ultimate Class 3 Guild by the valley’s entryway. The stage for this competitive quest was essentially set once these men identified the students as the guild tasked to deliver the Brigand leader.

Gu Fei quietly cursed at how despicable the system was once he heard the opposing team’s quest completion condition. Ultimate Class 3 was required to capture the Brigand leader alive, while the opposing guild was tasked to dispose of the Boss. There was simply no room for discussion, as the interest of both teams clearly clashed just by this fact alone.

“I’m sorry, but our mission is to capture him alive,” Gu Fei apologetically said.

“Naturally. It’s a competitive quest, after all, so it’s understandable for our quest conditions to differ,” the opponent replied.

At this point in time, someone from the opposing guild used Appraisal on Gu Fei and reported his findings, “Careful. This guy is at level 40.”

“Oh. A level 40 player has established a small guild and recruited these newbies...” These players of a small guild incorrectly deduced as they did not know of Gu Fei’s identity.

“So, how are we going to do this?” Gu Fei sighed.

“We won’t forfeit our mission!” the opposing guild resolutely declared.

Gu Fei turned to look at his students and laughed, “Naturally, we won’t be forfeiting either.”

“Since that’s the case...” the opposing players each gripped their weapons to show their intention to fight.

“Is there really no other way?” Gu Fei recalled the duel system that people used to fight over grinding spots. But while a new grinding spot could be found once a group lost to another, a quest would not have such an alternate solution once it was failed. Despite competitive quests being very contentious, the players never complained about this, especially upon seeing the system’s rich rewards for this sort of quests. Therefore, few people would feel awkward about taking up a competitive quest; instead, players would often celebrate if they acquired one. There was simply no way for them to abandon such a quest.

In fact, the players of this small guild felt very excited when they found out that the quest that they had gotten was a competitive type, and they were even more excited when they learned that they were up against weaker players. Why in the world would they give this competitive quest up with these? When Gu Fei asked for other means to resolve the matter, they did not even bother to consider it.

The four players of The Black Hand mercenary group came

forward at this point and asked the leader of the small guild, “Are you sure you don’t want our help?” As the guild leader looked at the four men questioningly, one of them pressed on, “Have you never heard of this player called ‘Thousand Miles Drunk’?”

“Ah!” everyone exclaimed in shock.

Gu Fei’s identity had recently been exposed, but the rumors involving him had originated from long ago. At present, he was undisputedly viewed as the top player in Yunduan City. “I heard that wherever this person points his sword, the opponent will instantly turn to ash, as he possesses herculean strength specially gifted by the system!”

“I heard that not even twenty or thirty men can take him down. Also, that he decimated the seven hundred fifty players of Carouse by himself!” Rumors of Gu Fei’s lethality were blown out of proportions. As the members of the small guild continued to discuss the hearsays about Gu Fei, their initial excitement disappeared and they began to feel disgruntled about facing off against such a formidable foe.

The four players of The Black Hand approached Ultimate Class 3, and the one at the very front of the pack chuckled toward Gu Fei, “To think we would meet like this before the finals.”

“Who are you?” Gu Fei naturally did not know who these people were.

“The name’s Monologue under the Moon,” the person replied, adding, “And I, along with these three, are from The Black Hand mercenary group.”

Chapter 236 - A Little Bit of Mana

The Black Hand mercenary group! Gu Fei could not help but do a double-take at the people standing before him upon hearing that name. They were people he and the rest of Young Master's Elite would be facing in the finals of the mercenary PvP tournament, after all.

Judging from their attire, Monologue under the Moon was a Priest, and the other three were a Warrior, a Thief, and a Mage. While the members of the small guild showed a fearful look on their faces upon learning of Gu Fei's identity as the Insta-kill Mage, the four men had self-assured stances.

Gu Fei determined these four men's intention and addressed the small guild, "Did you guys hire a mercenary group to help you? So you guys are confident of accomplishing this quest and don't plan to give it up?"

"Aren't you guys the same?!" the opposing guild retorted.

"We?" Gu Fei looked at his students and laughed bitterly. Not only was he helping these students complete their quest for free, he was also going to give them equipment when they got back... How was he a hired mercenary in this case?

Seeing that the other side was not willing to back down, Gu Fei simply pulled out his Moonlit Nightfalls and pointed it toward them, "Since this is how it's going to be, I won't be courteous then! Twin Incineration! Incinerate!" Gu Fei flicked his sword to his left and right. Two Thieves on Stealth faded into view with a surprised expression on their faces before disappearing once more.

Gu Fei saw a similar expression on everyone's face whenever he managed to hit a Thief who was on Stealth. He really wanted to tell all the Thieves out there to stop trying to attack him while on Stealth, since it was useless against him. And if the Thieves chose to use Stealth still, they should at least careful on how they

attacked him with it. “I have an item that can counter Stealth, so don’t—” Gu Fei was trying to tell these players about the redundancy of their action when he was interrupted by a cry from one of his students standing behind him. A Thief seemed to have carefully mixed into the crowd of students to stealthily dispose of the Brigand leader that was already in a critical condition. In the end, the Thief accidentally stepped on a student’s foot and got revealed.

This made Gu Fei’s kind words seem like a lie. Didn’t you just say that you have equipment that counters Stealth? Our man has already sneaked into your group without you realizing it, so what lie are you spouting?! Still, Gu Fei had indeed killed off those two Thieves that had been trying to sneak up on him. Everyone was baffled and went into deep thought about this.

What else could that lone enemy Thief within the group of students expect at this point? He tried to get out of the group, but the students were no pushovers, so he was very handily defeated by the joint attack of over twenty of them.

Although his death was tragic, he was still luckier than those two Thieves that had died by Gu Fei’s attack. Ultimate Class 3 and the opposing guild were in the middle of a competitive quest, and only one of these two sides was bound to succeed in it. Since the only way to resolve this matter was through PvP, the game officials did not wish to be vicious with the players. Therefore, during the competitive quest, the PvP penalty for the players on either side would be under a different set of rules. Players who died during this PvP engagement would not lose a whole level but would instead lose 20% of their experience points. In addition, killing a player would not add PK value on either side’s individual.

As for Gu Fei, he technically did not belong to either side. Anyone he killed would be dictated by the traditional PvP rules. Hence, those two Thieves he had killed off just lost a level each as Gu Fei’s PK value had increased by 2 points.

On the flipside, those members of The Black Hand mercenary group shared the same condition with Gu Fei. Had they taken up this mercenary mission from the system, they would have enjoyed the exemptions of the competitive quest. Although they would suffer a slightly harsher penalty of a 30% experience loss instead of the 20%, it was still better than losing a whole level outright. Since The Black Hand and the small guild conducted this business deal privately, the four men would not experience this protection of the system for this mission.

The members of Ultimate Class 3 became bolder with the swift deaths of the opposing small guild's three men and they began to clamor about taking down the opponents in one fell swoop.

"What are you making a ruckus for?!" Gu Fei bellowed at them. When all the students instantly became subdued, he commanded, "Line up and head back to the city!"

"Ah?!" the students expressed their shock.

"Leave this to me," Gu Fei solemnly said.

"Sir!" All the students felt touched. Since they did not know that their teacher's favorite pastime was to PvP, they were adamant about not leaving Gu Fei to his death while they got away unscathed.

Left with no other choice as he could not possibly kill his students to send them back to the city, he could only helplessly say, "Retreat over to the side, then. Let teacher here give you guys a lesson on PvP."

The word 'lesson' immediately gave the students goosebumps, and each of them showed an annoyed expression.

"Wait till you see teacher's kung fu!" Gu Fei had long wanted to demonstrate his kung fu to his students, but he had regrettably never had a chance to do so in reality.

"Oh, no! Teacher has gone crazy again," the students whispered

this to one another.

“Teacher really knows kung fu!” Ah Fa seriously told his fellow classmates.

“Oh, my! Ah Fa has gone crazy, too!”

“Is this the side effect of playing Parallel World for long?” they began to wonder.

It was Gu Fei’s turn to give them a withering look. Thinking that he could only prove it to the students through his actions, he took two steps forward.

“Seems like we can only settle this through PvP.” Monologue under the Moon still had that faint smile on his lips. He had already carefully observed the enemies’ composition; besides Gu Fei, the other twenty-four players were very young and therefore lacked enough combat experience. He could not help but wonder about the nature of this group. Whatever the case might be, their only opponent right now was Gu Fei alone and the others could easily be dealt with after.

“Come on, then!” The small guild’s players did not move and merely looked at Monologue under the Moon and his three other companions.

Gu Fei was undoubtedly a formidable foe, and getting killed by him would cause them to lose level. They felt that they should not waste the gold coins that they had spent hiring these members of The Black Hand mercenary group, and they prepared to use the four men to hold Gu Fei down long enough for them to bully the kids.

The twenty-three men’s goal was to complete the quest by killing off the Brigand leader, after all, so they actually did not need to eliminate many of the enemy players. Whether they would continue to fight afterward or not would depend on their opponents’ reaction.

Gu Fei, meanwhile, already resolved to resist them. Since this PvP was for his students, Gu Fei abandoned his favorite method of diving head-first into the enemies' ranks to fight them in close combat. Wielding the Moonlit Nightfalls in hand, he cast Descending Wheel of Flames and Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno.

Avoiding Gu Fei's spells was simply a mind game. His current opponents scattered about when they heard him chanting. When nothing happened after Gu Fei had finished his chanting, they stopped running away and hesitated over whether to attack him or not. Before long, however, flames sprouted from beneath the ground and a circle of fire emerged in the sky. These enemies that faced Gu Fei for the first time were utterly dumbfounded at the scene unfolding before them. Those who had unluckily fled into the AOE of Gu Fei's preemptively cast spell were expectedly insta-killed.

"YAY!" all the students cheered.

Gu Fei eyed Monologue under the Moon and the other three men of The Black Hand mercenary group. These four were indeed experts. Gu Fei had included them into his trap, yet they had very easily avoided his spell. Deducing Gu Fei's intention was easy once an opponent had understanding of his unique points.

When Gu Fei was chanting an incantation, there was no need for a player to run away in a hurry. Instead, he or she should note where Gu Fei was pointing at. Walking away slowly from that spot would do. In fact, that was how Brave Surge had previously escaped Gu Fei's AOE spell.

Looks like I'll have to fight at close range, Gu Fei said to himself as he rushed over to them.

"Miles bro, you can probably only cast one spell, right?" the opponent laughed.

"You guys have a pretty good understanding of my capabilities,"

Gu Fei commended. He had used Twin Incineration to kill the two Thieves from before. With the two AOE spells he had just unleashed, he only had enough mana to cast one last powerful spell.

“There are many of us here; are you planning to kill us all?” Monologue under the Moon asked while chuckling.

“That’s what I’m good at,” Gu Fei replied as he darted toward him.

“Arctic Whirlwind!” the Water Mage in the midst of the enemies’ formation unleashed his spell by waving his staff about. Circling over Monologue under the Moon, Arctic Whirlwind headed toward Gu Fei.

Monologue under the Moon was a Priest, so he naturally did not intend to stay in the frontline of the skirmish. He promptly retreated to the back, as the Warrior and Thief flanked Arctic Whirlwind’s left and right and dove toward Gu Fei.

Three separate attacks headed toward Gu Fei in quick succession. Gu Fei originally intended to insta-kill the two players using Twin Incineration while he dispersed Arctic Whirlwind, but the opponents did not give him the chance to do so. Truly, the four players of The Black Hand had a good understanding of Gu Fei.

Gu Fei took several steps backward, yet the enemies did not press on together. Gu Fei’s sword point flicked and he suddenly activated his Blink, appearing right behind the enemy Mage with a swish.

This action was still within the enemies’ realm of expectation, though. Monologue under the Moon promptly bestowed Heal on to the Mage and smilingly said to Gu Fei, “Blink? Doesn’t that mean that you’re out of mana now?”

Gu Fei smiled back at him as his sword lashed out, yet this attack was directed at the magic staff that the Mage was holding.

“Ah!” the Mage exclaimed, clearly not expecting Gu Fei to do such a thing.

Arctic Whirlwind was a spell that could be controlled if it remained channeled. Not only did the Mage who was controlling Arctic Whirlwind get interrupted by his move, Gu Fei also managed to close in on him. Batting the Mage’s magic staff askew instead of attacking him caused Arctic Whirlwind to lose direction and to hit the Warrior beside it.

Gu Fei turned around and raised his sword, “Thunderbolt! Strike!”

A crackle of lightning arced down and struck a Thief dead center, instantly killing the player.

Gu Fei looked at Monologue under the Moon with a bright smile on his lips, “I’ve still got a little bit of mana.” With that, he held Moonlit Nightfalls in his left hand and pulled out Sacred Flames of Baptism with his right hand.

Monologue under the Moon raised his holy staff to bestow Heal, yet the sword on Gu Fei’s left hand landed on him at this point. Although it did not do much damage, it nevertheless successfully interrupted his casting.

“You may have the mana, but can you cast your skills?” Gu Fei asked with a smile on his lips. The enemy Mage had received two slashes from him by now.

Chapter 237 - Perfect record

One of Gu Fei's two slashes procced the additional fire attack. This was actually no surprise since Gu Fei's proc rate for the additional fire attack was at 50%. However, the current players were not easy to insta-kill like in the past. Moreover, Gu Fei saw Monologue under the Moon incessantly bestowing Heal on the Mage he was trying to quickly dispose of. Meanwhile, the enemy Warrior's already slow movement speed was further slowed by his Mage companion's recently cast Arctic Whirlwind. Since two or three meters would now take the Warrior quite some time to traverse, what more would the five-meter distance he had with Gu Fei?

Monologue under the Moon naturally did not foolishly stand there. Since Heal was not a skill that required proximity to its target to work, he could stand far away to counter Gu Fei's ability to interrupt his Heal with a mere extension of his arm. Following this train of thought, Monologue under the Moon quickly retreated a few steps as he lifted his magic staff to chant once more.

"HIYA!" Gu Fei shouted. In the next instant, Monologue under the Moon's eyes bulged as he saw Gu Fei's Sacred Flames of Baptism fly toward him. Monologue under the Moon did not retreat very far, so the Chinese broadsword managed to strike his forehead, interrupting his Heal once more. Gu Fei then used the sword in his right hand to stab the Mage twice more. At close range, Gu Fei reduced the poor Mage into nothing but a punching bag. This was especially the case since the enemy Mage's wish to receive Monologue under the Moon's Heal never came to be.

Gu Fei's stars aligned at the moment as his Moonlit Nightfalls' Fatal Blow and his additional fire attack procced simultaneously. Given that the Physical Damage Gu Fei dealt was not low, the Mage could only throw Monologue under the Moon a resentful gaze before dying.

The Warrior only managed to arrive at the skirmish at this point and determinedly used the Charge skill at Gu Fei. Gu Fei nimbly dodged the moving block of metal hurtling toward him and casually slashed at Monologue under the Moon once more.

An unprotected Priest was as pitiful as an undefended Mage. Gu Fei flipped the dropped Sacred Flames of Baptism up in the air with his foot. Arming himself with his sword and the Chinese broadsword, he began to rain blows onto Monologue under the Moon with reckless abandon. Even his legs joined in on the fun and swiftly delivered brutal kicks to Monologue under the Moon from time to time.

Monologue under the Moon could only blame himself for striking at the wrong time. Gu Fei was usually not so unconstrained when he PvPed, so he failed to see the logic in executing attacks that would not deal damage. Unfortunately for his enemies, he was currently demonstrating the extent of his kung fu to his students! Monologue under the Moon had thus become the perfect recipient of all his attacks. The Warrior over by the side was in tears as well. The Freeze effect of Arctic Whirlwind had yet to end, so he could only watch Gu Fei unrelentingly attack Monologue under the Moon as they got further and further away from him. He really wanted to assist the Priest, yet his reduced speed would simply not allow it. He could only blame the fact that his friend Mage was wearing a lot of equipment that enhanced the effect of Freeze, causing it to last for such a long time.

The Priest Monologue under the Moon had no combat skill whatsoever, so he could only bear Gu Fei's endless blows until he finally turned into a stream of white light. What was more infuriating was the way that Gu Fei had smiled at him right before his death, "See you later in the PvP match!"

It was already too late when the Warrior regained his normal movement speed, as the one-sided beating was already over. With his slow speed, his current dilemma was on how to catch up with

Gu Fei if the latter decided to kite him. In the end, he was forced to bear the shame and watched as Gu Fei gave him a wide berth by returning to his students' side.

Those players of the small guild had not once stepped in to assist the four members of The Black Hand when Gu Fei was bullying them and instead chose to risk their lives targeting Gu Fei's students.

This small guild's number was at a clear disadvantage after suffering one of Gu Fei's spells, so the students laboriously managed to kill off three more of them. Defeating the small guild was only a matter of time now.

"I'm back!" Gu Fei yelled as he pointed his sword upward and roared, "Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno! Arise! Descending Wheel of Flames! Descend!"

Gu Fei smoothly chanted the spells, yet the players of the opposing guild that had learned their lesson last time did not flee and instead chose to locate where Gu Fei was pointing his sword.

Gu Fei was unfazed by their action and merely continued to point out a direction, causing the ones in that area to quickly flee for their lives. They had previously heard Monologue under the Moon and Gu Fei talk about the latter running out of mana, yet he had still managed to cast Thunderbolt after. Even when he was engaged in melee with them, his Twin Incineration seemed to flare from time to time as well. Facing the Insta-kill Mage, none of them dared to bet their lives on the possibility of Gu Fei running out of mana.

In the end, everyone who had scrambled to dodge the incoming spells was bamboozled. Gu Fei had truly run out of mana when he had cast that Thunderbolt spell.

When the small guild's players became distracted by Gu Fei's deadly might, the students were able to use that chance to send a hail of arrows and spells to them. Although the students did not

have much power in their attacks, they still managed to severely injure their enemies. The students enthusiastically surged toward the enemies amid Gu Fei's shout of: "Hey! Leave me some!"

"Sir, watch what we can do!" The students were still worried about Gu Fei, so they bravely and diligently eliminated the opposing guild, not sparing a bit of thought about Teacher Gu Fei's true feelings.

Gu Fei stopped caring about his image as a teacher when he was presented with such a situation and just rolled up his sleeves to enter the fray and fight for kills with his students. The students uniformly pushed onward, leaving Gu Fei by himself to attack the center of the enemies' formation. Ah Fa very anxiously called out from way behind, "Sir, escape quickly! I'm about to cast my spell!"

"Just cast it, then! I'll dodge it once you do!" Gu Fei replied. He then waved his magic staff and cast Descending Wheel of Flames himself.

Gu Fei was well within the spell's AOE and did not seem to have any intention of dodging it as he continued to slash at the enemies ruthlessly. His attacks forcefully prevented many enemies from escaping his Descending Wheel of Flames as well.

The flame wheel came crashing down with Gu Fei right in the midst of it. The small guild's players were already in a precarious state due to their diminished HP, so quite a few of them were killed off after taking Ah Fa's spell. Gu Fei glimpsed about him and quickly counted that seven men were left. Shocked, Ah Fa asked aloud from behind, "Sir, why didn't you dodge it?!"

Gu Fei looked backward and could not help but deride, "Dodge what? Do you think you're me?"

The students burst into laughter. Truly, Ah Fa's Spell Damage was absolutely incomparable to Gu Fei's.

Gu Fei's Descending Wheel of Flames could easily send people

back to the spawn points in the city if they chose to not dodge it, whereas Ah Fa's flame wheel could definitely not insta-kill anyone who took it head on. As such, simply bearing the damage was no big deal.

Gu Fei's sword rose and cut deeply, killing yet another player. He then proceeded to address the remaining six men, "So, shall we forget about this?"

The small guild's leader had lost his life earlier in the battle, so none of the remaining six men could make a decision, unsure how of they should respond. Gu Fei glanced over and saw that The Black Hand's Warrior was standing still by the other side.

He was an expert, after all, and could judge the situation better than the average players. Dying and losing a level for this mission was pointless since the enemies knew that his side no longer had the chance to emerge victorious.

"We're all doing a quest, so we won't be cruel. You guys can leave!" Gu Fei magnanimously waved his hand off to dismiss them. The six men exchanged glances before glancing over to The Black Hand's Warrior. Unsure of how to broach this situation, the seven of them could only lower their head and leave accordingly.

Gu Fei turned back to look at his students and saw that they were grinning from ear to ear in their excitement at winning this fight as they bragged to one another about how wonderful they had performed in the PvP.

"Pipe down!" Gu Fei put his Chinese broadsword into his dimensional pocket and raised his sword, "Where's our class monitor? Come out and bring us back to the city."

"Class monitor is dead!" the students replied. Their voice did not have any trace of sadness and some of them even displayed gleeful expression at their classmate's misfortune. Gu Fei suspected that this lot of brats had pushed their class monitor to bear the initial attack's brunt; otherwise, why would they be so happy about it?!

After lining up and taking a headcount, the students realized that six of them had died as well. Fortunately, their deaths were at the hands of the opposing guild, so they only lost 20% of experience points for their current levels.

Their opponents had it worse. Most of them died by Gu Fei's hands, so they naturally each lost a level. This was especially true of Monologue under the Moon and the two other members of The Black Hand. They had way higher levels compared to the small guild's men, so the total amount of experience points that they had lost was scarily high.

"Alright. Let's head back to the city!" Gu Fei motioned for the students to line themselves up and continue to head back to Yunduan City in cadence. All of them were currently feeling very excited, so they were incessantly chattering on the way back to the city.

These students now knew what the philosophy about 'living a life under the shade of a big tree' meant after this encounter. Had it not been for their Teacher Gu Fei, none of them would have stood a chance against anything by themselves. Even Ah Fa, the most powerful player among them, was incomparable to Gu Fei just from his "Do you think you're me" question.

The students felt extremely excited, so Gu Fei refrained from dampening their spirits and merely beamed brightly as he followed behind the troop of students.

While the students were feeling elated at the fight's outcome, those players who had suffered a defeat at the hands of Gu Fei were not feeling happy in the least. Naturally, this was how competitive quests went; the losing sides would usually bemoan their inability to complete their quests and the losses they incurred from the fights and would not really feel resentment toward their opponents.

In fact, it was Monologue under the Moon and the other

members of The Black Hand that were feeling resentful. Since they failed to help their clients accomplish their competitive quest, they had to not only return the deposit but also pay compensation in accordance to their mercenary group's rules to maintain a good image.

Simply put, although the small guild's quest failed, the The Black Hand's compensation would at least ease provide some relief to their bruised egos. As for The Black Hand's four players, not only did three of them had lost their lives, they also had to pay compensation. What was worse was that their group's track record of a 100% completion rate had been lost.

In hopes of salvaging this loss, Monologue under the Moon tried negotiating with their client, the small guild's leader, when the latter asked for refund and subsequent compensation, "Has the quest indicated you've failed yet?"

"Uhh... Nope."

"Do you wish to complete it, then?"

"Of course, we do."

"How about we gather more manpower and try again? The price would still be the same as what we have previously agreed on; how about that?"

The small guild could not ask for anything more, so they quickly agreed.

"Mmm... Head over to the Hall of Mercenaries and submit an employment request. We'll do this through the system this time."

The small guild's men quickly departed for the Hall of Mercenaries. People would definitely choose to go through the system upon knowing that their quests were a competitive type.

Monologue under the Moon reported this matter on the mercenary channel. Upon hearing that their clients' opponents had employed the help of Young Master's Elite, quite a few

members expressed their interest in the matter and volunteered to participate in the operation. A new team was once more gathered within Yunduan City.

Chapter 238 - A Cicada Casting Off Its Skin

Monologue under the Moon headed to Yunduan City's north gate to meet with the other members of The Black Hand mercenary group as he sent over a member with fast movement speed to the Hall of Mercenaries to accept the small guild's request.

There were many perks, besides having a larger player capacity, to a mercenary group being at a high level. For instance, a level 1 mercenary group could only pick up one mission at a time from the system, while a level 5 mercenary group could do five missions simultaneously. Naturally, the system had no way of limiting the amount of missions mercenaries could take from others in private. Furthermore, a high level mercenary group could assign certain members to have the right to accept missions, just like how that player Monologue under the Moon had sent to the Hall of Mercenaries could accept missions on behalf of The Black Hand.

Over by the north gate, Monologue under the Moon immediately spotted his fellow mercenaries chatting with one another when he got there. His comrades quickly greeted Monologue under the Moon upon seeing him as well and started to inquire about the strength of Thousand Miles Drunk.

Monologue under the Moon forlornly spoke about the matter at hand to them. Rumors had it that Thousand Miles Drunk was a Mage that could insta-kill opponents through his monstrously high Spell Damage. And yet, he had only used the defensive skill Blink against the four of them and had electrified a Thief by casting Thunderbolt once. As for him and his companion, Monologue under the Moon and the Mage were actually brutishly slashed to death by Gu Fei's sword.

In any case, Thousand Miles Drunk's two major weaknesses of possessing low mana and having slow casting speed had more or less been confirmed.

These two weaknesses were not just disadvantageous to a Mage; they also could be seen as extremely dangerous – if not fatal. Ironically, Thousand Miles Drunk continued to achieve amazing feats in-game even now. He was even publicly acknowledged as the number one expert in Yunduan City. All of them could just not wrap their heads around this.

“Come on, everyone. Let’s try to come up with a solution for this!” Monologue under the Moon urged everyone to think of a way to deal with Gu Fei.

“Is it really that difficult? A Mage with a slow casting speed means that it’s easier to avoid his spells. His low mana means we can quickly deplete his mana pool by luring him into using his spells. What use is there for someone to have high Spell Damage if he has no mana left to use it?” someone among them could not help but pose this question.

It was indeed the most logical approach to this matter. Monologue under the Moon and his three companions had in fact set up a plan in line with this way of thinking in that fight before, yet none of them had expected for Gu Fei to be impossible to deal with in melee despite his lack of mana. Monologue under the Moon felt that things had gone awry due to him not taking into consideration such a possibility. Had he made preparations for such a probability, things would not have been that disastrous. Now that he had more skilled players with him and a deeper understanding of their opponent’s capability, they should have no problems dealing with Gu Fei this time around.

At this point, they received the message that The Black Hand had successfully accepted the small guild’s request by the Hall of Mercenaries. The mission logs of The Black Hand’s members got updated with the new mission that the system had created on behalf of their client. After a while, the small guild’s leader along with his men came rushing toward them. Seeing the presence of so many members of The Black Hand, the guild leader timidly asked

if they had to pay extra money for this.

“Of course, not. We have caused you guys to suffer a loss due to our lack of understanding of the opponent’s strength; it should be us who are apologizing to you,” Monologue under the Moon replied diplomatically.

Honestly speaking, the small guild’s size could not compete with The Black Hand mercenary group’s, so the guild leader felt obligated to treat these mercenaries like gods after spending quite a tidy sum to hire them and accepted their words to the point of servility. He felt overwhelmed by this unexpected favor for his small guild upon receiving the experts’ calm explanation of the initial disastrous outcome of the fight for the competitive quest.

“Does your quest display their coordinates?” Monologue under the Moon asked the small guild’s men. In The Black Hand’s mission log, it only briefly stated about assisting the guild with whatever request it had and did not mention any information regarding the involved people for this particular competitive quest.

With the completion condition for this mission, The Black Hand could only complete it once the small guild succeeded on its quest by dealing the killing blow on the Brigand leader. As for the final reward, it was the employer and The Black Hand’s previously agreed on price. What the employer would earn from completing this quest would have nothing to do with The Black Hand.

Someone from the small guild looked at his quest log and shook his head, “It’s the same as when we first got this quest. It’s only showing the coordinates by the entrance to Yunxia Valley. It only states to capture and dispose of the Brigand leader on its way to Yunduan City.”

“Although the north gate is the closest route to the city, there’s no guarantee that they’ll take it.” Monologue under the Moon furrowed his brows.

“Do you know where they’ll be sending the convict to in Yunduan City? We can simply head over and wait for their arrival there,” someone suggested.

The person from the small guild once more shook his head, “The quest log only mentions ‘Yunduan City’.”

“Have you done this sort of quest before?” Monologue under the Moon asked his fellow brothers. The people in their mercenary group were all experts when it came to questing, but all of them shook their heads in response.

“Logically speaking, wouldn’t a convict be sent to the prison?” someone opined.

“This is a game; perhaps, it would end after sending it to the Quest Hub.”

“Perhaps, it would simply end by entering Yunduan City’s entrance....”

All began to voice their opinions regarding the matter, causing Monologue under the Moon’s head to hurt even more. A mercenary group was not like a large guild, so its manpower was limited. They only had over twenty men here at the north gate, so it was not enough to split them all up.

“How about this,” Monologue under the Moon pointed to a few present people with faster movement speed than the rest, “You guys will head out from the north, west, and east gates respectively; choose different route toward the coordinates of Yunxia Valley and see if you can find the players of the opposing guild and determine which way they are heading. Once we located those players, we can ambush them on their way back.”

“What does their group look like?” someone asked.

Monologue under the Moon thought for a while before giving a description of Gu Fei’s group, “An adult and a bunch of kids.”

“Got it!” the assigned people answered back, immediately setting

off toward the routes that they were instructed to.

After instructing his fellow mercenaries, Monologue under the Moon addressed the small guild's players once more, "You guys should hide for now. There's a chance of them recognizing some of you, which will then expose our intention."

The talk was over after that. Readyng their equipment for this operation, they patiently waited for their scouts' report. Meanwhile, other members of The Black Hand that were interested in Thousand Miles Drunk made their way over to the north gate once they caught wind of the matter. The purpose of these players of The Black Hand for heading there was not to help with the mission that some of their members had accepted; instead, they were there to see for themselves and get a sense of their strongest opponent in the finals of the mercenary PvP tournament.

After waiting for several minutes, one of the deployed scouts finally sent a report, "I've spotted a group of players heading straight to the north gate from the direction you have mentioned."

"Is it a group composed of an adult and a bunch of kids?" Monologue under the Moon asked.

"There's someone hanging back a little further from the main group, so I can't tell for sure. I'll get closer to check..." the scout reported, saying, "Man, this group is rather orderly! What do they do?"

"That's them, alright!" Monologue under the Moon excitedly said before instructing, "Don't get any closer to them. Just keep an eye on them from afar; don't let them discover you." He then told his surrounding brothers, "They're coming. Let's go!"

"What about us?" The small guild's players asked, unsure if The Black Hand was actually helping their guild with the quest. He felt that he was out of the loop on certain things.

“You guys don’t have to go. Just wait for my message. Once we are done, the mission is as good as yours!” Monologue under the Moon smilingly replied.

The scout kept him updated of Ultimate Class 3 Guild’s coordinates. Seeing that the group was almost upon them, Monologue under the Moon hurriedly divided the players with him into three teams and positioned them in the left, right, and center, fanning out to attack the enemies from three separate directions.

Monologue under the Moon, who was situated in the middle, could see their enemies making their way over.

The members of Ultimate Class 3 were still walking uniformly, shouting out a cadence from time to time and causing quite a cloud of dust to scatter about. These all became the signal for their arrival.

“Get ready!” Monologue under the Moon, who was hidden inside the teams, let the members whom the opponents would not recognize take the lead on this approach, each of them acting nonchalant as they closed in on Ultimate Class 3.

“Locate Thousand Miles Drunk first. Archers, get ready to directly insta-kill him,” Monologue under the Moon ordered. He was actually quite stunned by this turn of events. Countless of methods, such as getting several Archers to bombard him with arrows on Homing Projectile, could be used against a Mage like him, so why had he not fled yet? How in the world did such a careless man survive until now? This question was what he was most curious about.

The Archers hidden in their formation arched their bows with nocked arrows as they searched the neat rows of students for their target with Eagle Eyes.

Black robe and dark purple sword... Those were Thousand Miles Drunk’s signature getup. However, no matter how much they

looked, there was simply no one dressed like that in the approaching group. All of them were wearing crappy equipment and looking quite young. A bunch of kids and an adult... This approaching group was just made up of a bunch of kids! Where was the adult?

“Target can’t be seen!” each of the Archers reported accordingly.

Priests did not have Eagle Eye, so Monologue under the Moon could not see this for himself. Hearing the Archers’ reports, he wondered if they had gotten the wrong people. He brought his team along and approached the group. When he was almost in front of Ultimate Class 3, Monologue under the Moon ascertained that they had gotten the right people. This group’s formation was similar to its previous one, and some of the players in it looked familiar as well. He himself looked familiar to these children, as quite a few of them began chortling when they spotted him!

“F*ck! We got tricked!” Monologue under the Moon suddenly realized what had happened and looked even more closely at the enemies before them. Indeed, the bounded Brigand leader was nowhere to be found.

Their opponent had already expected The Black Hand to attempt another assault, so these kids had been made to divert their attention from the small two-to three-man squad sneakily delivering the Brigand leader elsewhere.

“The target is not here!” Monologue under the Moon announced on the mercenary channel. Once they learned that their task was done, the players who were in charge of scouting the opponents were keenly making their way over to Monologue under the Moon’s location to have a look at the glorious Insta-kill Mage.

“Quickly head toward the other city gates; send men to all of them! There should only be two or three of them right now, carrying a bounded Brigand!” Monologue under the Moon yelled on the mercenary channel. At the same time, he sent a private

message over to the player of the small guild to act as well; they could discuss the matter after they thought of a method to locate Thousand Miles Drunk and the others.

The students were rocking back and forth with laughter when they arrived by Monologue under the Moon, “Our teacher has a word for you.”

“Teacher? Thousand Miles Drunk?” Monologue under the Moon asked, confused.

“Yup. Our teacher said, ‘I’ve already said before that we’ll meet in the PvP match, so I’ll only see you during it!’”

“F*CK!” Monologue under the Moon blew a gasket. He stared at this bunch of children before him and fervently wished that he could just kill them all.

Chapter 239 - Rotating Twin Incineration

The brat who was gleefully conversing with Monologue under the Moon was none other than the student Ah Fa. A kid like him did not have the prudence of an adult, so his blatant show of his mirth further infuriated Monologue under the Moon.

In the end, Monologue under the Moon still had to care for The Black Hand's image. They were a mercenary group and not a guild. With the guild's aim to dominate others, it could get away with bullying the weak and helpless. As for a mercenary group's aim to do business online, it could never prey upon the weak. While a mercenary group could showcase its PvP prowess, it had to maintain a forthright and pristine image; only by doing that could they be well-received by the public and their business continue to grow.

Thousand Miles Drunk seemed to have expected this, so he was very bold at letting this bunch of unruly, low-level children act as bait.

"Please pass a message from me to him as well; tell him: 'I won't leave till you arrive'," Monologue under the Moon grimaced as he said that.

"Okay. Bye-bye!" Ah Fa waved Monologue under the Moon goodbye, and he along with the others mirthfully left. Their teacher was not with them now, so they no longer neatly lined themselves up and became a messy mob once more. Their orderly rows just then had unintentionally drawn the enemies toward them and had caused the opponents to view them as better players than what they really were. Everything was just a ploy.

Monologue under the Moon watched the kids go; his tightened grip on his magic staff almost stripped the lacquer off the wood. His companions could understand what he was feeling right now, and each of them came over to offer their support.

“Don’t give up; it’s not the end yet. The opponent has taken a detour, so perhaps he won’t be able to enter the city so soon. We may still have time to block the city gates,” someone encouraged.

“Oh, you’re right!” Monologue under the Moon reorganized the teams once more and informed the small guild of the current situation. He even specifically emphasized that the enemies had split into two teams, with one group of weak children heading back via the north gate and another group entering the city through another city gate.

Deep down, Monologue under the Moon was feeling bitter that he could not vent his anger on those kids for fear of sullyng his mercenary group’s good name, so he could only hope that the players of the small guild would take action and kill those kids upon receiving this information. This was why he had specifically informed them of the bunch of kids’ heading direction.

Unfortunately for him, not all people in this world were as despicable as he was. The small guild’s players did not show any intention to vent their frustration on the kids and merely expressed their remorse over the opposing guild managing to fool them, timidly adding, “Can we do anything to help save this quest?”

F*ck*rs. A bunch of good-for-nothings! Monologue under the Moon ridiculed them inside as he replied genially on the surface, “We’ll try our best!”

The men with him were quickly deployed to all the city gates. He also called for the other members of The Black Hand mercenary group to give them a hand. Unfortunately, it was currently the peak hour of the night to play the game, so most of the members were busy with their respective quests. Those who were available to aid them were already with him, so he did not manage to round up more helpers this time around. Instead, the fact that they had not dealt with Thousand Miles Drunk yet caused quite the stir on the mercenary channel.

“What’s the situation over by the south gate? Anything to report from the east gate? How about you guys at the west gate?” Monologue under the Moon asked each of them in one go.

“Nothing here”, “Negative”, and “No updates here” were the replies of the teams as they made their way over to those gates. The players with faster movement speed had already left for those directions. The low Agility Monologue under the Moon felt quite unsettled inside as he proceeded to one of those locations at a slower pace. Among his over twenty men, he had made sure to send the ones with faster movement speed over to those three routes. But while almost half of the twenty odd men had fast movement speed, no more than three or four players could be sent out to each gate, so Monologue under the Moon dared not conclude that the number was sufficient to fight against Thousand Miles Drunk.

“Everyone, be careful!” Monologue under the Moon warned.

“Relax! Taking him on should be easy with so many of us.”

Players who had not faced Gu Fei could not imagine just how formidable he was and were basing their judgment using their knowledge of MMO for the various job classes in Parallel World. In their minds, Thousand Miles Drunk might have high Spell Damage, but he was still just a Mage. Low mana and slow casting speed... Such characters required a proper team to protect them and were hardly a force to be reckoned with in solo fights!

“He’s really amazing even when in melee, so everyone should be careful,” Monologue under the Moon said this with the slightest twinge of fear in his voice.

“Is that so? We really gotta see what’s up, then!”

Everyone’s nonchalant attitude made Monologue under the Moon even more anxious. Unfortunately, he had no way to properly describe just how skilled Gu Fei was at fighting. He had an ominous premonition of what was about to happen, but he could

only give them a few more warnings of: “Be careful.”

“Relax, man!” everyone felt slightly irked by Monologue under the Moon’s constant reminder.

“East gate, we are in position! We don’t see anyone.”

“West gate, we are in position! We don’t see anyone.”

“South gate, we are in position! We don’t see anyone.”

The south gate should be the furthest from Gu Fei, since he would have to go around the city to reach it. As for The Black Hand’s men, they could go straight to the south gate from the north gate by weaving through the city.

With the east and west gates equidistant from the south gate, the three teams managed to get in position in no time. None of them spotted their target along the way, so all they could do was wait.

Two Thieves and two Archers hurriedly made their way over to the west gate. The two Thieves immediately entered Stealth mode once they got to the west gate. One Archer had chosen to be a Sharpshooter and the other had chosen to be a Hunter. A Hunting Trap was placed by the Hunter just outside the city gate.

It was actually better to set the trap on the road itself, but this Hunter’s proficiency with the Hunting Trap was still low, which meant that the Hunting Trap he set would be noticeable to the naked eyes. Only an idiot would actually step on it if he placed it on the paved road past the city gate. By placing it outside the city gate, even if his Hunting Trap could not sufficiently be disguised, he could at least do it manually. The Hunter dug a small hole just outside the gate and placed the Hunting Trap inside it. He then carefully sprinkled some dirt over it to make the trap hard to spot, unless someone was carefully searching for it.

Just as the Hunter finished setting up the trap, the Sharpshooter who was watching the road with Eagle Eye gave him a nudge and yelled to the two Thieves, “That guy over there seems to be our

target.”

The Hunter lifted his head up to look and cursed, “F*ck me!”

Some individuals were quickly treading along the foot of Yunduan City’s wall. The man in front was dressed in black mage robe, looking exactly like how the rumors had described Thousand Miles Drunk.

What made the Hunter lost his composure was the fact that he had placed his trap at the center just outside the city gate. Since the target would just make a right turn once he got to the city gate by treading along the foot of the city wall, the chances that the target would step on to his Hunting Trap were virtually non-existent. The Hunter felt discontented that his effort to set up the trap would go to waste, so he tried bargaining with his three companions, “Lure him over to step on the trap?”

Gamers always had this desire to show off their skills, especially those that only they had. In the end, the three men simply replied, “We’ll see how things go.”

“Shall the Thieves engage him first? He happens to be coming straight at you, so you guys can just stab him directly.” Gu Fei was still a distance away, so they took the time to discuss their tactic. It was at this moment that Monologue under the Moon sent out this message: “Thieves, the target may have an item that counters Stealth!”

Although Gu Fei had claimed to possess such equipment, Monologue under the Moon had also witnessed him fail to detect a Thief on Stealth in their earlier skirmish. Monologue under the Moon decided to play it safe by believing Gu Fei’s claim instead of expressing his doubt over it.

Only at this point did the four players realize that they had yet to report about spotting Gu Fei to the group, so they hurriedly mentioned this on the mercenary channel. Since Gu Fei had equipment that countered Stealth, the tactic that they had wanted

to employ moments ago would no longer work.

“Guess the trap would be useful, eh?” The Hunter was invigorated once more.

“He’s a Mage; why would he even run to us?” Gu Fei was nearly on them, yet they were still arguing on how to deal with him best!

“You never know! Ah! He’s about to reach us; quickly get into your positions.”

Although they learned that Gu Fei could counter Stealth, the two Thieves still maintained their Stealth. The four men positioned themselves behind the trap as they eyed Gu Fei covetously.

Gu Fei, who was coming over from afar, pretty much guessed that the suspicious men standing over by the west gate must have been sent after him. He sighed to himself at the enemies’ fast reaction. The two students in charge of carrying the Brigand leader had been replaced by two Thieves from the two Warriors before, yet the speed that they advanced forward was not much faster than the Warriors as they had to carry a body. Making the Brigand leader walk on its own would be no good as it would surely be unable to run at all.

As his team got closer, Gu Fei realized that his ambushers were composed of two Archers and two Thieves on Stealth. With their eyes trained on him and the look on the two Archers’ faces, Gu Fei ascertained that they were truly after him.

Gu Fei smiled lightly as he addressed his two students, “Take your time, you two.” With that, he broke into a full sprint toward the four enemy players.

“Look! He’s charging over!” the Hunter exclaimed, saying, “Retreat! Let him step on to my Hunting Trap!” The other three heard his request and took two steps backward. The two Archers arched their bows with nocked arrows and aimed them at Gu Fei; they were ready to fire at any given moment.

The Hunter's thoughts and emotions were fluctuating as he impatiently waited for Gu Fei to step on to his Hunting Trap.

Two arrows whistled through the air as they were fired off. Instantly, Gu Fei appeared before the four men and the two arrows continued to sail behind him.

“Blink! I’ve totally forgotten about that skill of his!” The Hunter blurted out in exasperation. The two Thieves hastily flanked Gu Fei’s sides to pincer attack him.

“Twin Incineration! Incinerate!” Gu Fei boomed. His nearness to the four men made it somewhat inconvenient to wield his sword normally. This was just a minute problem for someone of Gu Fei’s caliber, though. His sword twirled about as he held it in a reverse grip, placing it obliquely beside his body even as he turned his waist from the right to the left.

A flaming dragon followed Gu Fei’s rotation, creating four beams of white light behind him as it traveled for one hundred eighty degrees. Gu Fei flourished his sword, returned it inside his dimensional pocket, and waved to the two students, “Hurry up! Let’s continue onward!” He then thought to himself, This Rotating Twin Incineration is a pretty good move when the opponents are that close to me....

Chapter 240 - Students need to prioritize studying

The Black Hand's mercenary channel burst into activity once more. The four players who had been killed by Gu Fei began arguing and criticizing one another. Finally, they put all the blame on the poor Hunter, "You sh*t. Making us wait for him to step on to your Hunting Trap. Step, my *ss!"

The Hunter felt maligned but could not refute their claim. In retrospect, he had really made a tactical error by making the others wait for Gu Fei to initiate the attack, which had allowed the latter to effortlessly insta-kill the four of them.

While these four men continued to bemoan their fate, the rest of The Black Hand rushed over to the west gate. How would they make it in time, though, when Gu Fei and his two students promptly sprinted toward the NPC prison upon entering Yunduan City? With all the winding streets and intersections, the routes Gu Fei and company could take were as plentiful as the hair off the back of a cow. How would The Black Hand's mercenaries find them when they did not even know where the three's destination was?

Although quite a few guild quests were obtained from common locations, such as taverns, many similar quests and missions ended in places like the prison, Bounty Assignment Hall, and so on. The Black Hand's players only numbered to a hundred, so they dared not split up their force too much upon knowing how strong Gu Fei was. The only option left for them was to comb through the entire city, yet they soon received bad news from the small guild: The system announced that the quest had ended!

"Ohhh!" Ultimate Class 3 Guild's players over by the north gate also received a similar system notification. Receiving the huge experience points from the successfully completed guild quest,

quite a few of them leveled up on the spot. White light flashed continuously for a time. Meanwhile, some players of the opposing small guild that were nearby looked on with envious eyes.

Besides experience points, the students also gained a few item rewards which were randomly allocated. Most of the items they received were average blue-or white-tier equipment, yet these students still considered them as rather valuable.

Since the equipment ignored job class when it was randomly allocated, these students once more displayed their outstanding unity by exchanging the item rewards with one another according to their job classes. The din they made left those players of the small guild salivating once more.

Monologue under the Moon was extremely incensed right now. His face was blackened with anger as he stalked over to the north gate. Their client's competitive quest failed, so their mercenary mission also failed as a corollary. Since they had picked up this mission through the system, their mercenary group's name over by the rankings in the Hall of Mercenaries had regrettably been given a '1' digit for their failure. Moreover, there was still the indemnity clause that their group had established to worry about. Not only did Monologue under the Moon have to return the small guild's deposit, he also had to compensate the small guild by shouldering its quest completion fee.

The students completed their guild quest and earned experience points and equipment. The small guild might have failed the competitive quest, but it at least earned quite a sum from The Black Hand mercenary group, so the loss was not that big.

Overall, the one that got the shortest stick in this whole business was The Black Hand. A few of its members lost a level, the group was obligated to pay the client a tidy sum for failing the mission, and The Black Hand even lost its flawless record. There was a big commotion on the mercenary channel as the group leader, Black Index Finger, expressed his dissatisfaction at how the matter had

unfolded.

Monologue under the Moon, who was in charge of overseeing this particular mission, failed to complete it and also caused a substantial loss to the mercenary group... This made it quite difficult to free him from blame.

“Thousand Miles Drunk!” Monologue under the Moon grinded his teeth when Gu Fei coincidentally bumped into him on his way back to the north gate with the students. He was about to hand out equipment to his students once more.

“Oh. You’re here, too!” Gu Fei spotted Monologue under the Moon and the small guild’s players squatting by the north gate and felt quite surprised. The quest has ended, so why are they loitering here for? Are these people intending to do something? Gu Fei internally prepared himself to fight at any moment.

“Sir! Sir!” The students surrounded Gu Fei upon his return and showed off their newly acquired equipment.

“Mhm. You’ve all done quite well for yourselves! Follow me; I still have some with me!” Gu Fei brought his students to the warehouse, feeling quite disappointed that Monologue under the Moon did not make a move in the end.

The warehouse contained all of the equipment Gu Fei had farmed from level 0 to level 40. There were low level and high level – the good and the bad – among the items he had brought out and threw on the ground.

The students cried out in jubilation and crowded around the equipment on the ground to snatch what they could. It was like Chinese New Year¹ had arrived earlier for these students, causing the other players who had come to the warehouse to gawk at them. Some of them even thought that this was robbery in progress, so they dared not approach the students.

“Don’t snatch. Line yourselves up first!” Gu Fei yelled for the

students to stop their ill-disciplined ways.

The students promptly lined themselves up as Gu Fei tasked a few of them to arrange the items according to job class. Ah Fa's suggestion to let the ones who did not receive any item rewards from the completed quest pick first was received with approval from everyone. The students came forward one by one and picked out equipment. Although not all of them would end up being satisfied, they were just glad that this was even happening.

Some of the students were above level 30, while the others were low level, with three being newbies. Gu Fei felt very gratified to see the pile of equipment before him being put to good use.

"Teacher is really cool!" The students praised their teacher sincerely. As a gesture of appreciation for what Gu Fei had done for them, Ah Fa told his fellow classmates, "Take out the mage equipment we've got and let teacher have a look; maybe, there's something teacher can use."

The Mages among the students willingly stepped forward to show Gu Fei the equipment that the system had rewarded them for the completed quest.

Gu Fei did not even look at them and merely waved his hand, "No need; keep the items for yourselves!"

"Teacher has reached level 40, so these items aren't up to his standard anymore!" The students enviously expressed their awe, unaware that the equipment Gu Fei had was even more polarizing than what they thought.

While his sword, robe, and boots were top grade, his other trinkets and gear were still those that Will-low had picked out for him in Yueye City.

Nonetheless, the three top-grade equipment Gu Fei had could be blamed for raising his expectation regarding the quality of equipment. Currently, he considered any equipment that was not

at the level of his three equipment as not worthy of changing into.

As the students hailed Gu Fei with praises, he looked at the time and rained on their parade, “Alright, it’s getting late. Get everything in order and go offline, you lot!”

“But it’s only a bit over 9 P.M. It’s still early!” the students protested.

“A little over 9 P.M. is called ‘early’? Have you done your revision for today’s class? How about preparation for tomorrow’s class? Are you done with your homework, and if so, have you checked it through? Log off; everyone log off. Students like you lot must prioritize their studies,” Gu Fei lectured.

After hearing this, the students felt so dejected! Still, none of them dared to rebel against their teacher’s intention. Although he was just a P.E. teacher, he still had the power to make them run eight laps after class. The student dispiritedly headed back to the designated log-off points. Some tried to sneak off when Gu Fei was no longer in sight by running off elsewhere, but Gu Fei’s message arrived shortly after, “Why are you not offline yet?! Do you wanna run ten laps tomorrow?!”

These students could only sigh in lamentation. Had they known that this would happen, they would not have added their teacher as a friend. Right now, even if they somehow managed to sneak off, their lit up names in Gu Fei’s friends list would still indicate that they were very much online.

And even if they made their names appear offline, various methods, such as refreshing the friends list, existed to check whether they were online or not. A monk might run away, but the temple remained... The students had no choice but to log off in the end.

Gu Fei watched as the names of all his students dimmed one by one. He refreshed his friends list and checked once more, nodding contentedly after. With how things had progressed, it was perhaps

not bad for a teacher like him to play a game with his students, as it could help them maintain a healthy level of gaming.

Gu Fei thought up to this point as he ran toward the Bounty Assignment Hall. His PK value was currently over 10 points, so it would be better to erase them all. When he saw that a player had a PK value of 5 points, which was way above the others on the Wanted Players list, Gu Fei could not help but feel very elated. The guild leader of Carouse, Brave Surge, was the last wanted player he had seen with such high PK value.

Although it was a duel between Mages, the ensuing fight proved to be quite a challenge. Preferring a challenging target, Gu Fei unhesitatingly picked this 'Bounty Mission'. He then ran off toward the indicated coordinates, which appeared to be somewhere beyond the walls of the city.

This usually meant that the target would be grinding; not only would Gu Fei save time searching for his bounty target, he would also perhaps be able to fight with the latter's friends, essentially killing two birds with one stone. While others doing 'Bounty Mission' would feel that such a target was a hassle, Gu Fei only felt elation. He, unlike most people, had the ability to complete such missions, after all.

Gu Fei was instead worried about his target's buddies being too brotherly, as this would certainly cause Gu Fei's PK value to rise instead of drop. Such a situation had happened before. He had once come back from doing 'Bounty Mission' that was supposed to lower his PK value by 1 point but instead increased it by 3 points. That was because his target's companions were loyal enough to willingly throw their lives at Gu Fei for targeting their friend.

Anyway, there was no point in dwelling too much in the past. After readying his equipment and making sure that his HP and mana were full, he headed off toward the coordinates.

The set of coordinates changed every minute it refreshed, but the

change was very minute, so Gu Fei got assured even more that his target was currently grinding. He headed south once he left the city, closing in on his target with every step. He did a rough estimation of the location based on the coordinates and realized where his target was currently at. It was an area Gu Fei had yet to visit.

Speaking of which, Gu Fei would always grind on monsters twenty levels above his, and doing 'Bounty Mission' often led him to Yunduan City's neighboring grinding maps. This meant that he frequented places others would not go to unless they were planning to grind on them. For an area to be a foreign territory to Gu Fei only meant that it was a grinding map beyond level 60.

Gu Fei felt very excited. It had been such a long time since he met an expert! Most of his bounty targets nowadays had been players below level 30, as the level 40 characters seemed to have completely washed their hands off of PvP.

He did not know who that expert was, but for that person to actually grind on such high-level monsters, only a handful of experts in Yunduan City could do so!

Gu Fei continued to make his way toward the coordinates even as his surroundings became more and more unfamiliar. Following the main road and passing through two hills, the land before his eyes now looked exceptionally cheery. An embankment lay beside a dense forest and a peaceful village. The system prompt stated that this place was called Suoyun Village.

This was the naming convention of Parallel World. Within the region of Yunduan City, yun1 was the main motif, so every mountain, forest, village, or river would have this word in it to form the official name. It was clear-cut and simple, nothing that required plenty of thoughts.

Gu Fei would often check information for any grinding maps in search of the next tier of monsters that he could grind on, and he

had unintentionally come across such a place before.

Suoyun Village was very similar to Yeguang Village of Yueye City: It had Werewolves as well. But while the Werewolves in Yeguang Village were coexisting peacefully with humans and were quest NPCs, the ones in Suoyun Village were the complete opposite as they viciously hunted humans and were treated as grinding monsters.

More importantly, this place was a level 70 grinding map.

Chapter 241 - Regenerating Werewolves

Since Gu Fei's target could fight monsters thirty levels beyond his, he was now unsure if the person was alone or in a party. If it was the former, he would sincerely praise this person.

When Gu Fei looked at this matter from a different angle, he could say that he had more or less met almost all the highly skilled individuals in Yunduan City, so he wondered if any of them had equipment that could beat monsters thirty levels higher.

Svelte Dancer and Drifting... These two were among the Five Unyielding Experts of Parallel World, and the chances of one of them being his target were high. Thankfully, he could easily find out if one of them was his bounty target. Gu Fei sent each a message directly addressing this matter: "Do you have PK points on you?"

The two were high-level players, so them having PK value was as natural as them having ten top-grade equipment. As expected, both players replied: "Yes."

Gu Fei immediately became alert: "How many points?"

Drifting promptly replied that he had 1 PK point. As for Svelte Dancer, being a lady that she was, she quickly followed up her admittance of having 1 PK point with: "Why are you asking?"

"I'm clearing off my PK value, so I'm trying to avoid getting someone I know..." was Gu Fei's reply.

"Tsk! You better not dare pick the 'Bounty Mission' for me, or I'll rip you apart," Svelte Dancer retorted.

Gu Fei did not reply to that as he had no wish to argue with her. For additional insurance, he asked his comrades on the mercenary channel.

Young Master Han would never 'dirty' himself with something like PK points, so asking him if he had PK value was as good as

asking him if he had a terminal illness, and he disdained to even reply to Gu Fei. The rest simply answered that they had none at the moment. These experts did not inquire deeply on the matter as this was not the first time Gu Fei had asked them such a question. Ever since that time Gu Fei had mistakenly picked Royal God Call as his bounty target and vice versa, he had made it a habit to ask his fellow mercenaries for their PK value before doing 'Bounty Mission', telling them to erase their PK value as soon as they could. It would be quite troublesome to find a resolution for the matter of Gu Fei accidentally picking up their 'Bounty Mission', after all.

After confirming that the player who could grind on monsters thirty levels above was not one of his acquaintances, Gu Fei high-spiritedly proceeded to Suoyun Village.

Gu Fei could already make out the silhouettes of the Werewolves within the woods. Parallel World was ultimately a fantasy-themed game, so it would be remiss if the game designers did not add these scary and frightening creatures. However, this was also a full-immersion game, so the players would need to have a certain level of psychological resilience if they were going to face these savage and bloodthirsty beasts.

The game designers felt the need to gradually ease the players into this by making it so that the low-level monsters would slowly become fantastical as their level increased. Simply put, players could tell how deadly a monster was just from its looks. The higher level the monsters were, the more powerful and horrendous they would look. This so-called evolutionary design was too extreme for open beta when the designers chose to put adorable cats and dogs in the beginner maps and inadvertently caused quite the uproar among the players.

Creatures like the lycanthropes were often the prime villains in horror films, so for them to be present at the level 70 threshold showed how much care the designer team had put into rating them.

Gu Fei was quite far from the Werewolves in the dusky woods, so he did not attract their attention. Checking the coordinates once more, he confirmed that his target was really somewhere within the village. The village appeared quiet and deserted. A wide, wooden bridge extended before the village and there was a road that led people who took the mountain path right into the village.

Gu Fei got on the bridge and proceeded to the village, but before he even made it halfway, two Werewolves suddenly appeared out of nowhere, panting heavily as they stood by the head of the bridge.

Gu Fei had once crossed paths with their kind in the church by Yeguang Village outside Yueye City. Although it was but a brief encounter, Gu Fei was clearly no match for that Werewolf back then. Had it not been for the quest condition requiring the Werewolf to flee, he would have most likely been killed by its claw swipe.

The two Werewolves before him were grinding monsters, so they would naturally not run off once they got injured. If Gu Fei fought with them right now, he would still be no match for them despite him being ten levels higher than before.

Gu Fei might be undefeated in-game thus far, but that was mainly due to him possessing fast speed and reaction; it just so happened that these two aspects were the fortes of Werewolves. Gu Fei assessed the monsters before him using the strength of the Werewolf he had faced back then as gauge. If he had confidence to beat these level 70 Werewolves, he would come here to level grind long ago.

Moreover, Gu Fei had only considered a one-on-one fight. Since two Werewolves were blocking the bridge like this, it was needless to say how things would turn out for him. Gu Fei stood in the middle of the bridge for the longest time, yet the two creatures before him showed no signs of leaving.

Gu Fei had no choice but to beat a hasty retreat. Since he could not cross the bridge directly like so, his only choice was to follow along the embankment and enter the village via a longer route.

Turning his back to the other end of the bridge, Gu Fei decided to save time by jumping from the bridge to the embankment. Following his landing on the embankment, he heard a howl from behind.

Gu Fei hurriedly sidestepped to dodge. He faced backward and saw a Werewolf leap out from under the bridge to pounce at him. He did not know how the Werewolf had walked all the way to here from under the bridge, but Gu Fei never once spotted it due to the bridge blocking his sight of it. Naturally, he had no clue of its existence when he leaped from the side of the bridge. Doing so caused him to enter this Werewolf's aggro range. It then unhesitatingly hurtled itself toward Gu Fei and attacked him.

Gu Fei did not get flustered when the Werewolf pounced at him. He quickly chanted a spell and blinked five meters away from where he stood. The Werewolf's claws swiped thin air once more and it snarled in frustration as it gave chase to Gu Fei.

Gu Fei was originally planning to flee when he created this five-meter distance from the ferocious beast, but upon seeing the Werewolf's moves, he had a sudden stroke of inspiration and went forward instead of retreating. The hand holding Moonlit Nightfalls lashed out with Twin Incineration.

The spell's flames burned the Werewolf's skin and hair, causing it to howl and become more aggressive. Still, its attack patterns remained the same; Gu Fei dodged the Werewolf's attack and struck it once more, not showing any signs of being at a disadvantage.

Upon seeing the Werewolf's movement, Gu Fei decided to fight with it despite its faster speed. Deep down, he was feeling puzzled by this Werewolf's inferiority in terms of strength and speed to

that Werewolf back in Yeguang Village.

Any average player might think that the reason for this was his increase in strength and speed, but the close-combat expert Gu Fei thought differently, as he could accurately judge the strength and skill of his opponent, separate from his fighting capability.

What Gu Fei forgot was that the Werewolf he had clashed with for the chain quest in Yeguang Village was not ordinary. Adrian had used the Fang of the Wolf King to shapeshift into a Werewolf Lord. Although the strength he had displayed was nowhere near that of a true Werewolf Lord, the average Werewolf would still be inferior to him in every aspect. Gu Fei mistakenly used Adrian as the standard for every Werewolf, causing him to inflate a Werewolf's actual combat strength. This was yet another aspect of the game mechanics that Gu Fei had failed to understand.

But while he could meet the Werewolf's every strike, its HP and defense were still frighteningly high. Gu Fei used Twin Incineration – the strongest spell in his arsenal – on it thrice, and he even smelled the pungent odor of burned hair and flesh, yet the Werewolf's attacks did not falter in the least, incessantly snarling and tearing at Gu Fei. The Werewolf's saliva dripped and frothed in its maw, occasionally flying out; it was the very definition of the word 'disgusting'.

Gu Fei was now helpless at this point. His Blink was currently unavailable, so he could only endure dealing with the Werewolf. The Werewolf did not show signs of tiring, and it in fact even slowly recovered from the burn wounds of his Twin Incineration. Gu Fei could tell this from the scent of burned flesh slowly becoming fainter.

This... This was the Werewolf's regenerative ability!

It was as if Gu Fei had suddenly awakened from his dream as realization dawned on him. It was no wonder this Werewolf had yet to die despite suffering from all his slashes and burns and even

appeared to be more invigorated from all the abuse. It was not due to this Werewolf having high HP or defense but was due to its inherently fast regenerative ability.

Gu Fei's Moonlit Nightfalls was at level 70, and the Werewolf was also at level 70. Although the sword was considered to be top grade, Gu Fei's low Intelligence and Strength meant he was unable to deal the usual damage that struck fear to the enemies just with his weapon's Attack Power. Not being able to insta-kill the Werewolf after hitting it with Twin Incineration thrice... This was due to Gu Fei not having enough stats to bring out the sword's full potential.

The amount of HP I reduce is lower than the amount of HP it regains, Gu Fei finally met a situation he had no means of resolving. In a scenario where one could not kill the quarry despite putting all into the fight and where one could not escape the strong opponent, any other player would just helplessly wait for the monster to finish him or her off.

Unfortunately for this Werewolf, it was currently up against Gu Fei, the very same person who had completed the chain quest involving a shapeshifting Werewolf in Yeguang Village. He was also in possession of a weapon called Sacred Flames of Baptism, which was the bane of the Werewolves' existence.

Flames of Baptism was just a level 30 weapon, and plenty of better quality weapons with additional fire attack naturally existed out there, yet Gu Fei had not replaced it all this while. This was due to the village elder performing a ritual on it as part of the chain quest, which changed it into a 'Sacred' type and granted it the ability to 'nullify regeneration'.

This trait usually had no effect, but when it was employed against Werewolves, it could uncompromisingly become a hindrance to these foul beasts.

Gu Fei returned to his senses with a jolt and hastily replaced his

Moonlit Nightfalls with Sacred Flames of Baptism. Sacred Flames of Baptism's Attack Power was very inferior to Moonlit Nightfalls'. Just its Physical Damage had problems penetrating the Werewolf's high defense. Thus, the Chinese broadsword's main source of offense was still its additional fire attack. Who knew that Sacred Flames of Baptism would demonstrate an outstanding result when used against a real Werewolf? One slash from it left an open wound that looked quite like it was scorched, albeit a faint silvery glow was hidden within this scorch which was brighter than a flame's glow.

The additional fire attack that soon followed lit this wound aflame, intensifying the smell of burning flesh once more. The Werewolf was evidently in greater pain from this attack using Sacred Flames of Baptism than Moonlit Nightfalls', as its whimpers became more mournful.

Gu Fei did not relent in his assault and his slashes arrived in rapid succession. Before too long, the Werewolf collapsed on the ground in a heap. Gu Fei sighed in relief. Werewolves were not overwhelmingly strong, after all, and the key to vanquishing them lay in taking care of their fast regenerative ability. If a level 70 player that came to grind in this map could not match the Werewolves' fast regeneration, he or she would probably just become matchstick for these creatures.

On a side note, the experience points Gu Fei had gotten from killing the Werewolf were indeed worthy of its high level. Brimming with confidence, Gu Fei stepped on to the bridge once more after replenishing his HP and mana and resolutely headed toward those two Werewolves at the other end of the bridge.

Over by the Game Administration Department of Parallel World, the monitoring team happily informed Ye Xiaowu, "Chief Ye, that guy whom you have eyes on just killed a Werewolf thirty levels above his today."

From the perspective of the staff of the monitoring team, Gu Fei's

actions and control did not violate any rules, but his ability to leave the game designer Ye Xiaowu helpless and stunned through his achievements had them keeping an eye on Gu Fei as well.

Chapter 242 - If that's the case...

Ye Xiaowu had more or less predicted that Gu Fei could kill a monster thirty levels higher. The strongest aspect of a level 70 Werewolf was its regenerative ability. He knew that Gu Fei would be a menace to Werewolves after Gu Fei had gotten himself a weapon that could completely nullify regeneration from that chain quest back then. Moreover, Gu Fei's full-Agility build allowed him to almost match a level 70 Werewolf's speed. Actually, he was more surprised that Gu Fei was only troubling the Werewolves now despite the latter's indomitable fighting prowess, which Ye Xiaowu had personally witnessed when Gu Fei had beaten up other players at level 0!

The monitoring team resumed work upon seeing that Gu Fei's newest achievement did not elicit their desired classic reaction from Ye Xiaowu. Actually, Ye Xiaowu was at a loss on how to deal with Gu Fei. He could only secretly thank his lucky stars that Gu Fei was not a gaming maniac; otherwise, with his leveling efficiency and ability to grind on monsters far beyond his level, he would most likely be five levels higher than the other players if he spent over ten hours in-game.

Inside the game, Gu Fei confidently stepped on the bridge once more and made his way to the other end. The two Werewolves were still standing at the other end of the bridge. After evaluating the strength of the Werewolf he had just fought with, Gu Fei figured that he was more than capable of taking on the two of them. Although that would require greater concentration and precision, it was precisely this exertion that made things more interesting for him!

He did not even think of fighting the two Werewolves one at a time and merely took out Sacred Flames of Baptism posthaste as he dashed forward to engage the monsters in an intense fight. He experimented with swapping Sacred Flames of Baptism and

Moonlit Nightfalls as he fought them and learned that the Werewolves could not regenerate the damage caused by Sacred Flames of Baptism but could regenerate all the damage caused by Moonlit Nightfalls, since the damage either attack caused seemed to be calculated differently.

Upon uncovering this, Gu Fei went a step further and tried a different way of attacking; he accurately struck with Moonlit Nightfalls the wound created by Sacred Flames of Baptism and achieved a spectacular result. Specifically targeting the open wound had the same effect as nullifying regeneration, and the defense even appeared to be weaker in that part as well. Gu Fei chanted Twin Incineration and Moonlit Nightfalls' Physical and Spell Damage burst forth, causing the Werewolf to howl in pain and to die quicker.

While this feat was theoretically easy to execute, employing such precise strike on a small, fine wound in reality was hard. Since the Werewolves' speed was slightly faster than Gu Fei's, defeating them using such a method would be less efficient than consistently dishing out strikes with Sacred Flames of Baptism.

Gu Fei considered this to be a challenge that he had never experienced before as he fought the Werewolves using this method.

A NPC was just that in the end. After killing the Werewolves, Gu Fei's steadfast use of such specialized move allowed him to grasp the monsters' attack patterns. The difficulty for him of accurately wounding the target like this was significantly lowered once everything became predictable.

Gu Fei was no longer as focused as before, and he finally registered the pinging sound of his Windchaser's Emblem, which reminded him of his purpose for coming here.

Glancing at the latest coordinates, he saw that the target had moved quite a bit, but it was still somewhere within the village.

When all was said and done, these Werewolves would be respawning in this village for players to kill them every day, but that player who could fight against monsters thirty levels higher was someone he would not meet often. Gu Fei hurriedly finished off the Werewolf he was currently fighting and ran toward the coordinates displayed.

The layout of Suoyun Village was similar to most in-game villages, but because this place was a Werewolf's nesting ground, it made everything look dilapidated. Weeds and unkempt grass grew uninhibitedly everywhere in the village while deadwood and dried leaves cluttered the deserted paths, creating a rather dark and decaying atmosphere. Gu Fei walked along the path leading to the village. From time to time, a Werewolf would pounce out and attempt to attack him from the surrounding broken walls and decrepit buildings. Gu Fei faced these ambushers as he kept on pressing forward with measured steps.

The coordinates refreshed once more, and the location indicated was just a wall away from him. Gu Fei mentally prepared himself as he ate half a loaf of bread and an apple. With his HP and mana full, he started to closely observe his surroundings. Gu Fei tightly gripped Moonlit Nightfalls and slowly walked over once he confirmed that he was no longer going to gain the aggro of any nearby Werewolf after coming to this wall.

He took a turning, saw half a man's body disappear from a nearby corner ahead, and hurriedly gave chase. When he saw no traces of a Werewolf in this area and the lack of any Werewolf's corpse on the ground, Gu Fei felt somewhat suspicious, yet he still did not stop his forward advance. He peeked over that corner and saw his target's back. Gu Fei rushed out before abruptly stopping dead in his track, his body turning rigid almost instantly.

The person slowly faced him and looked at Gu Fei with a huge grin.

"So it was you..." Gu Fei slowly said.

“He he. To think you would still remember me.” The person chuckled.

Why would Gu Fei not remember this man, Nightmare of Death? Besides No Smile, he was the second person whom Gu Fei had zealously hunted down to retrieve the dagger, Frost Memories, which this person and his gang had looted from Sword Demon.

The man belonged to a trashy organization that killed players to loot their equipment. Gu Fei was originally being targeted by them that day, but due to Sword Demon’s incident, they had suddenly found themselves on the receiving end of Gu Fei’s attacks, instead. Afterward, Gu Fei had looked forward to this unsavory person taking revenge on him, yet he had heard not a peep from him ever since. Even the gang that looted players’ equipment had also vanished without a trace, no longer prowling for new targets as diligently as before. Sword Demon had spent considerable time searching for this man, yet even he had turned up empty-handed.

Suddenly, several men came running from behind one of the side walls and darted over to the two of them, the man in front shouting at Nightmare of Death, “Act quickly! What are you exchanging pleasantries for?!”

The person beside the man was self-assured, “There’s no hurry. My equipment has traits that enhance the effects of Hunting Trap, making it last as long as fifty-four seconds. Saying a few more words is no biggie as long as you speak quickly.”

“What’s the point in having such a long duration if the target doesn’t even step on it?!” his companion derided.

“Yeah, but he did step on it,” the man happily announced to everyone, “You’ve still got thirty-seven seconds!”

Gu Fei looked at the newcomers and smiled, “Oh. It’s the Calabash Brothers!”

They were the same players who had come to Nightmare of

Death's aid outside the 'Thieves' Union and had been handily beaten down by Gu Fei.

"Thirty-one seconds!" the man who had set the Hunting Trap announced without bothering with Gu Fei's taunting.

"Man, you are really strong that even those Werewolves couldn't kill you. Still, you won't be able to escape us!" Nightmare of Death mirthlessly laughed. Although about twenty seconds were left for them to speak, it could take a turn for the worse if they continued to drag things out. Nightmare of Death's goal was to kill Gu Fei for the latter to lose a level and for them to loot his top-grade equipment, so chatting with him was definitely not a priority right now.

Gu Fei had 10 PK points on him right now; death would cause him to lose three levels. Moreover, PK value had a correlation to the chances of a player to drop equipment. With Gu Fei's PK value, he was bound to lose a lot of his items in one go; there might even be a possibility of him dropping everything he owned.

Nightmare of Death and his gang specialized in killing players to loot their equipment, so they were very familiar with the mechanics involved in that field. Today was definitely the ideal scenario that they had dreamed of. No more words were exchanged after. Hunting Trap only limited a player's movement and would not stop him or her from attacking. Nightmare of Death was holding a grudge against Gu Fei for the longest time and knew very well of Gu Fei's stupendous melee capabilities, so he dared not step forward to take him on. The Mage with him prepared an AOE spell, the Warrior readied his Charge, and the Hunter nocked an arrow on Snipe – all were planning to use skills that would take full advantage of Gu Fei's temporarily immobile status.

"Go to hell!" Nightmare of Death eagerly awaited his brothers' attacks on Gu Fei that would cause him to burst like a piñata. Gu Fei merely smiled calmly in response. Lifting his sword up, he pointed toward a location and said, "Translocation! Blink!"

“Ha ha ha! Blink, he said...” The Hunter who had placed the trap guffawed. Blink was considered as the fastest form of movement and was therefore one of the skills disabled by Hunting Trap, so how would he activate it?

And yet, Gu Fei unexpectedly materialized behind someone just as the Hunter uttered the word ‘blink’. Blink’s effect was faster than spoken words, it seemed.

The person whose behind Gu Fei had teleported to could not react in time to the latter placing his sword across his neck and him patting his shoulder with a hand, “You’re right. A trap is useless if the target doesn’t step on it!”

“What?!” All were in shock as they turned their gazes on the corner of a wall. The Hunting Trap that the Hunter had set manually already triggered and exposed itself, yet Gu Fei’s movement was still as free as before. Could he have avoided the maws of the trap in the exact moment that it had been triggered?

What kind of reaction time is that?! Everyone was baffled.

A trap was something a player had to manually set up. While it slightly decreased the springing speed of the trap, anyone could only escape it if his or her reaction time was beyond that of a normal human being.

Actually, anyone could see if someone’s foot was caught in a trap or not. Reflexively, they glanced over to Gu Fei’s legs, but they could only see Gu Fei’s dark, long robe draping over his legs and obscuring them from view.

All were immediately angered by this and they hatefully glared at Gu Fei; he was never trapped and merely acted the part, it seemed. Gu Fei laughed uproariously, “No matter how contemptible you may think my action is, it’s still not comparable to the despicable deeds you guys did!” With that, his Twin Incineration flashed and killed off the man whose neck he was threatening with his sword. The remaining enemies had crossed swords with Gu Fei before, so

they knew fully well what he was capable of. Although the players held numerical superiority, they only thought of preserving their lives at the moment by running off in separate directions.

Gu Fei was planning to kill this bunch of players when he teleported himself within the crowd, but he never expected them to flee without standing up to him even once. Since Gu Fei did not know of any skill that could let him split himself, he could only content himself with killing off another player with low HP with his sword before chasing after Nightmare of Death.

Chapter 243 - Seriously Too Close

Nightmare of Death was a Thief, so by activating his Fleetfoot, he was able to nimbly disappear from the wall corner. Still, he was no match for Gu Fei's all-Agility build and movement speed that was further boosted by Windchaser's Boots. Gu Fei kept his fixed eyes on Nightmare of Death's back as he swiftly pursued the latter.

Nightmare of Death was very cunning and extremely crafty. Fleetfoot was not Stealth, and it had a limited duration, yet he managed to maintain his distance from Gu Fei through with this skill. But given Gu Fei's equipment and faster movement speed than Nightmare of Death's, it was only a matter of time before he caught up to the latter.

Logically speaking, Stealth could better hide a hunted from a hunter. The skill was practically useless against Gu Fei, though, based on their intel on him. What Thieves like Nightmare of Death did not know was that everything would be fine as long as they buried their heads in the ground like an ostrich and avoided looking at Gu Fei after activating Stealth....

Nightmare of Death was naturally not privy of such a solution, so when he saw Gu Fei ignoring everyone and solely chasing after him at a breakneck speed, he could only bemoan his fate inside.

Gu Fei closely followed Nightmare of Death from behind, aware that he would eventually catch up to the latter. Still, he kept in mind the possibility of Nightmare of Death using Stealth to hide among the mob of Werewolves.

What Gu Fei was unaware of was that Stealth could not be used near the Werewolves, as according to Nightmare of Death and his gang's study of this village layout and the Werewolves' programmed behavior, this sort of non-humanoid monsters possessed highly sensitive noses and keen ears just like real wolves. Although their other senses were not as powerful as their eyes'

ability to perceive, the Werewolves were still able to detect anyone attempting to get close to them from several meters away. If this lot of Thieves used Stealth, the Werewolves would surely pounce on them when they got near the Werewolves, which was exactly what the other Thief in Nightmare of Death's team had forcefully done.

As such, Nightmare of Death did not dare to get near the Werewolves and decided to avoid monsters and evade Gu Fei altogether as best as he could. The death penalty for dying to monsters and players would equally result into the loss of level and even equipment.

Nightmare of Death was at his wits' end right now, so he quickly sent his comrades a message asking for their help. His brothers, who had scattered at the sight of Gu Fei beginning a massacre, quickly gathered in one place once they knew that he was solely chasing after Nightmare of Death. Naturally, they intended to counterattack even if Nightmare of Death did not prompt them to do so.

Although these players still held numerical superiority, they were not brave enough to surround Gu Fei. Nonetheless, they had learned a few things from that previous incident.

At a certain clearing in Suoyun Village, the players each chose a position with a viable escape route. They planned to use ranged attacks on Gu Fei, but if those failed, they would unhesitatingly flee for their lives. This way, Gu Fei would be forced to settle on chasing after only one of them.

Their arrangement was done very quickly. After discussing their plan thoroughly, they informed Nightmare of Death of the place's coordinates and of how he should enter it. The Hunter did not give up on ensnaring Gu Fei using his Hunting Trap, and he set a trap at the probable path Gu Fei would take on his way to the place before informing Nightmare of Death of its location to prevent him from accidentally stepping on the trap, instead.

Nightmare of Death sprinted over to his brothers' given coordinates as he mentally calculated the distance he would need to cover and the time required over his running speed. His heart slightly calmed when he realized that his Fleetfoot would sufficiently bring him over to the location.

However, Nightmare of Death soon discovered that he would be unable to take the shortest route toward the place if he was to take into account the Werewolves' aggro range and avoided it accordingly. If he took a detour, his Fleetfoot's duration would end before he could reach the destination. This was something beyond his control, so Nightmare of Death could only curse the heavens as he literally raced against time and focused on searching the Werewolves' positions for somewhere he could possibly shave the time off.

Eventually, Nightmare of Death only had to run out of the alleyway he was currently in and he would arrive at the location. His Fleetfoot already ended, but since victory was within grasp, Nightmare of Death gutturally roared like a Werewolf and put his all into this final sprint, passing an imaginary finish line with a small leap. This step he took to exit the alleyway allowed him to safely pass the trap that lay beneath the surface of the earth.

Nightmare of Death landed and looked around, yet he could not find where his brothers were hiding. He knew that this was only because his brothers had hidden themselves very well to increase their odds of successfully ambushing the enemy, so he acted his part and pretended to run forward anxiously.

Here he comes! Nightmare of Death's hidden companions muttered to themselves when they saw him exit the alley. Ready... As long as someone burst out next from that alleyway, they would all unleash their attacks.

The Hunter fervently hoped that Gu Fei would step on to his trap, so that he could properly show off his capability. Otherwise, his brothers would certainly use this to ridicule him.

“ATTACK!”

Someone darted out of the alleyway at an unbelievable speed and everyone unleashed all sorts of attacks on him – the Mage casted an AOE spell, the Archer shot an arrow on Snipe, and the Warrior and Thief even flung their spare weapons to deal maximum damage in that instant. These players prepared themselves for the possibility of their first wave of attacks to fail at killing off Gu Fei, so a second wave of attacks was swiftly executed by them after....

“Ah!” A familiar-sounding scream was heard, but it did not come from the alley entrance. All looked at the scream’s origin and gawked.

The scream came from Nightmare of Death, and standing before him with a sword pointed at him was Gu Fei.

“How was this possible?!” all wondered as they gazed back at the alley entrance.

The Mage’s spell burned something fiercely, and the others’ attacks hit something as well, yet what they had hit was a bunch of Werewolves that was currently crowding the alley entrance.

“JUST WHAT IS GOING ON?!” everyone exclaimed in unison.

It was at this point that the system’s wickedness was thoroughly displayed. Even the fighting expert Gu Fei would be unable to instantly deduce where all the attacks had come from with so many of them being unleashed at once, yet the system did so instantly. It did not even go through the process of searching for the attackers and merely sicced the Werewolves on their respective assailants – the ones shot by arrows ran straight toward the hiding Archer; the ones struck by the thrown weapons bounded toward the hiding places of the Warrior and Thief; the ones affected by an AOE spell hurtled themselves toward the petrified Mage who had it the worst as his attack inflicted the most damage on the monsters, filling him with endless despair that sapped him of the will to flee; and since a Werewolf got ensnared by the Hunting Trap while

being fired at by an Archer, it did not let the Hunter off.

The Hunter's Hunting Trap was only at level 40, so the level 70 Werewolf merely trampled on it when the trap got triggered. Still, the system counted that as a form of attack and unleashed a deadly consequence on the poor player.

Even Gu Fei was a little taken aback by such a scene.

He did not know that Nightmare of Death had set up an ambush for him while fleeing. His Blink's cool-down time had long ended, but since Nightmare of Death had been more than five meters away from him, he had saved it for when Nightmare of Death's Fleetfoot would end. In that way, he could bridge the five-meter gap between them and catch him by surprise with his Blink once more.

When Nightmare of Death had darted out of the alleyway and into the clearing, his Fleetfoot had already ended, so the distance between him and Gu Fei had subsequently shrunk. Moreover, he had intentionally slowed down his pace to lure Gu Fei into their ambush upon exiting the alleyway. This had given Gu Fei a chance to teleport himself right next to him. As for the mob of Werewolves... Gu Fei had not intentionally pulled them. He might be an OP fighter, yet his gaming knowledge was rudimentary at best. Something like the Werewolves' aggro range was only known to the experienced gamer Nightmare of Death and ilk. Gu Fei, for his part, was absolutely clueless about it.

If the Werewolves had been dumbly standing around in place, Gu Fei could have appropriately given them a wide berth, but since they had been moving about to patrol the village aimlessly, while Nightmare of Death had deftly eluded their aggro range, Gu Fei, meanwhile, had clumsily lured a load of them over.

These Werewolves possessed slightly faster movement speed than Gu Fei. While Gu Fei slowly closed in on Nightmare of Death, the Werewolves behind slowly gained ground on him as well. He

had resolved to kill Nightmare of Death and had not even thought of giving up the chase even when he had spotted the Werewolves hot on his heels. Since he knew how to handle the Werewolves, Gu Fei was unafraid of them catching up to him. Instead, he had focused his energy on catching up to Nightmare of Death. When the opportunity to finally use Blink came, he unhesitatingly did so, increasing his distance to the Werewolves as a corollary.

And yet, the scene currently unfolding before Gu Fei made him reflect on his action. He had been far too careless! Were it not for the fact that he had coincidentally used Blink before exiting the alleyway, he would be unable to survive all these people's attacks with his speed.

Could he even dodge such an ambush? Gu Fei dared not think of it any longer; he would just cross the bridge when he got there.

Still, that was a really close shave! Gu Fei might be reflecting on his carelessness internally, yet he still could not help but laugh at the scene unfolding before him.

The Werewolves were not as set on targeting Gu Fei as he was on Nightmare of Death, so when he exited their aggro range, plenty of them readily gave up chasing after him, while Gu Fei continued his hunt for Nightmare of Death. No more new Werewolves appeared in that rundown alleyway, and those still trailing after Gu Fei already showed signs of giving up their pursuit as well. This bunch of helpers in the clearing actually unintentionally gained the Werewolves' aggro for themselves and became the monsters' newest targets. Instantly, the small clearing turned into a crime scene for these Werewolves.

Even the players whom Gu Fei had not guessed the hiding places of emerged following the Werewolves' crazed hunt for them. The whole place echoed the surrounding players' resentful cries. The poor Mage, who got surrounded by a whole pack of Werewolves, steeled his heart and killed himself off with his spell... With how these Werewolves tore and bit their targets, these players even

suspected if they would still be in one piece when they respawned.

Since the rest of the gang did not have the capability to escape the Werewolves, none of them was able to escape a tragic end. Although the Thief managed to escape with Fleetfoot, since he had been focusing on the monsters behind him, he gained the aggro of the many Werewolves along the way, and when his Fleetfoot's duration ended....

Before long, the people that Nightmare of Death had brought with him to Suoyun Village were killed off by the Werewolves, and only Gu Fei and Nightmare of Death escaped the massacre since they were outside of the Werewolves' aggro range.

Nightmare of Death no longer had any schemes left in him and waited for Gu Fei to do his deed. Contrary to expectation, Gu Fei sighed and said, "Forget it. I'll let you off this one time!" As Nightmare of Death stared at him with dumbfounded eyes, Gu Fei continued, "Go and join your brothers!" With that, Gu Fei forcefully kicked Nightmare of Death into the arms of a Werewolf....

Chapter 244 - Lasting Sentence, Dying Breath

Parallel World was a harmoniously paradoxical world!

Although the ferocious Werewolves' attacks were bestial, the visual effect for them was mellow. Nightmare of Death did not get injured by the Werewolf's tight hold; instead, it was the beast's two bites that sent him on a one-way ticket toward Yunduan City's spawn point for Thieves. The white light that took him away was brighter than usual – a clear indication that Nightmare of Death had dropped equipment.

There was a clear difference between the chances of someone with no PK value to drop equipment and someone with PK value. The more PK value someone had, the higher the person's drop rate would be.

Nightmare of Death's PK value of 5 points was not considered low, so it made sense for him to easily drop equipment once he was killed. Before being transported to a spawn point, Nightmare of Death heard the clanking sound of his equipment dropping. Working in this particular 'field', he was very sensitive to this sound. He promptly checked his entire body when he revived at the Thieves' Union and his eyes immediately filled with tears from deep regret that no words could describe.

Before all this, his companions had cautioned him many times to store all his equipment in the warehouse when he had volunteered to become the bait with 5 PK points for this operation. Unfortunately, Nightmare of Death had felt that this operation was foolproof. Even if they failed and Gu Fei managed to kill him, he would be sent to prison at worst; he was not going to drop equipment or lose a level as a result of it. Who would have expected that Gu Fei would use the Werewolves to deal the killing blow on him?

The three pieces of equipment that Nightmare of Death had dropped lay silently on the ground. He only had 5 PK points after all, so not many items of his dropped. Still, such a penalty of losing equipment and level was truly satisfying when it befell an enemy. As Gu Fei shared this good news to him, the usually calm Sword Demon perked up and said, "I'm going to the Thieves' spawn point now...."

Gu Fei quietly prayed for Nightmare of Death, as Sword Demon's tenacity did not lose to his. In fact, Sword Demon was far scarier than him when it came to gaming. Gu Fei would only kill someone until that person logged off, and he would go offline himself shortly after. Sword Demon, meanwhile, played MMOs as if it was his lifeblood; Gu Fei was not even sure if the word 'offline' existed in Sword Demon's vocabulary. There was a high chance of him camping outside the Thieves' Union for a whole day. This was what was called 'corpse camping' in World of Warcraft back in the days. Parallel World had no corpse to camp, only the determined would keep vigil by a spawn point.

What made Gu Fei even sorrier was that Nightmare of Death would surely be unable to escape Sword Demon's clutches since Gu Fei's 'Bounty Mission' was still active! His set of coordinates was being updated every minute, which Gu Fei unhesitatingly relayed to Sword Demon while he waited for the Werewolves to disperse. Nightmare of Death's three pieces of equipment were still lying on the ground, and it would be a pity to not pick them up.

Gu Fei still did not know of the Werewolves' aggro range, so he could only keep his distance from them. He would go ahead and kill the Werewolves if there were only one or two, but with so many of them hovering over the equipment, Gu Fei could only patiently wait for them to go away.

After several minutes, most of the Werewolves had wandered off, and only two remained in the once crowded clearing. Gu Fei gripped his sword and rushed forward to engage the two in a

skirmish. Striking the Werewolves with Sacred Flames of Baptism, Gu Fei accurately hit the wounded spots with Moonlit Nightfalls next; he exchanged blows with the monsters for quite some time. Gu Fei actually got scratched by one of the Werewolves, but he fortunately managed to dodge the rest of the attack, so it only dropped his HP by half. Attempting to employ high precision attacks on the two Werewolves was indeed difficult, yet Gu Fei steadfastly pushed himself to do so; after ending the life of the second Werewolf, Gu Fei heard the clatter of equipment falling.

“My luck is pretty good today!” Gu Fei exclaimed happily.

As the players progressed through the game, they all realized an important truth: the higher a monster’s level was, the lower its drop rate was. A majority of the players that were at level 40 did not actually possess high-grade equipment. The system-operated smithies only sold white-tier equipment up to level 30, so the market essentially did not have higher level equipment despite the demand for it.

The equipment that the level 70 Werewolf had dropped was even rarer because of this. Gu Fei bent down, picked the item up, and checked what type it was. It was a dagger. He did not carry out a thorough inspection of it and merely picked up Nightmare of Death’s dropped equipment. They were two daggers and one small ring.

Gu Fei was speechless. In a short span of time, he had actually gotten himself three daggers.

Gu Fei closely inspected the items. The dagger that the Werewolf had dropped was called Wolf’s Fang. Such high-level equipment had 270% Dagger Aptitude... Besides that, it was only white tier! His luck was not that impressive, after all. Still, the two daggers that Nightmare of Death had dropped were definitely unusual. Gu Fei gasped audibly when he saw that they were actually green tier! The two daggers were long and short respectively. The long dagger was called Lasting Sentence while the short dagger was called

Dying Breath. According to the description, this weapon set was called 'Lasting Sentence Dying Breath'. It seemed to be a two-piece set.

Lasting Sentence's Dagger Aptitude was at 220%, while Dying Breath was at 210%. Lasting Sentence provided Dagger Enhancement of 30%, increased damage by 10%, boosted Strength by 10 points; as for Dying Breath, it had traits that gave 30% Attack Enhancement, increased attack speed by 10%, and boosted Agility by 10 points. Besides all these, the green-tier equipment's unique traits were active, the proc rate of Fatal Blow was increased by 15%, as well as increased the effect of Fatal Blow by 15%, and it possessed a skill called 'The Duet of Mayhem'.

Just like Gu Fei's Moonlit Nightfalls, the system did not provide a description for the item skill.

Gu Fei could tell that the daggers were not run-of-the-mill from their damage output alone. This was especially the case with Lasting Sentence; the damage it could deal was well beyond the level 40 Warrior's current weapon with its Dagger Enhancement trait. Given the attack speed of daggers, their damage was usually lower than other weapons'. A top-grade dagger could not match a common-grade sword's or axe's damage output. Since the dagger in Gu Fei's hand could deal higher damage, it was clearly leagues beyond the current weapon level just like his Moonlit Nightfalls.

As for Dying Breath, its traits were clearly focused on speed. Gu Fei held Dying Breath and brandished it about for a bit, ascertaining that it was handier than the other daggers he had used before. This was despite Gu Fei not meeting the Dagger Aptitude requirement to tap on the weapon's full potential.

He was unsure how Nightmare of Death had acquired the equipment. Gu Fei would bet that the items were stolen goods. As he was thinking of this, he posted the details of the spoils of war on the mercenary channel for his fellow mercenaries.

This was inside a game, so a person did not need to key in the details of an item on the chat window. As long as a player was holding on to the equipment, he could directly share its details on the channel.

The Young Master's Elite's experts could definitely assess the value of equipment far better than Gu Fei. No one typed anything on the mercenary channel for quite some time after Gu Fei had shared the equipment's details to everyone.

"Uhm... Is anyone here?" Gu Fei asked with uncertainty.

"What amazing daggers, and they're a set!" Brother Assist exclaimed, "Based on the stats, they're at the level 55 standard, right?"

"Yes..." The dagger specialist Sword Demon affirmed as he asked, "Coordinates?"

"What?" Everyone was clueless.

Gu Fei quickly sent over Nightmare of Death's latest coordinates. He was preoccupied with fighting the Werewolves and was later enraptured by the equipment, so he inadvertently stopped sending Sword Demon the minute update. Sword Demon had been grasping at straws all this while.

"What are you two up to?" Sword Demon and Gu Fei seemed to be speaking in codes, so everyone was at a loss.

"We're hunting!" Gu Fei replied.

"What happened?" everyone asked. They were used to Gu Fei bounty hunting and never bothered to inquire after his activities. While it might be normal for the usual groups of friends to help one another, Gu Fei would feel annoyed at them if they were to help him with his bounty hunting, as it was his pastime in Parallel World. Since Sword Demon seemed to actually be helping Gu Fei with it today, everyone's interest could not help but be piqued.

"My bounty target happens to be that guy who has killed and

looted Sword Demon before... What's his name again?" Gu Fei had long forgotten the person's name.

"Nightmare of Death." The self-proclaimed Information Expert Brother Assist, meanwhile, did not. He would never skip recording even the tiniest detail in a game. Rumors had it that he had a whole slot in his dimensional pocket that was specifically designated to contain all the information he had collected thus far.

"Yeah, that guy. I looted the equipment from him, too," Gu Fei admitted.

"That gang has quite the haul from their equipment looting, huh," Young Master Han languidly stated.

"Coordinates," Sword Demon curtly asked once more.

Gu Fei faithfully passed the information over quickly.

"Where are you right now?" Sword Demon asked.

"Suoyun Village. I'm about to head back!" Gu Fei replied.

"Suoyun Village? But that's a level 70 grinding map! What are you doing over there?!" the experts exclaimed in shock.

That was when Gu Fei very casually posted the details for Wolf's Fang.

When the experts saw Wolf's Fang's damage output, they could immediately tell that the equipment was at level 70 or higher despite it only being white tier.

"You can deal with Werewolves? That's a monster thirty levels higher than yours!" Brother Assist yelled this out in disbelief. Everyone knew that Gu Fei could kill monsters twenty levels higher, but they did not expect him to be capable of dealing with a monster beyond that level. How did he manage to breakthrough by another ten levels?

"This item here happens to completely nullify a Werewolf's regeneration." Gu Fei posted the details of Sacred Flames of

Baptism on the mercenary channel, asking, “Have you seen this ‘Sacred’ trait before?”

His question was once more met with silence, as it was the first time that they had seen such a weapon trait.

“I even got this from that guy’s death today!” Gu Fei somewhat got addicted to ‘flaunting’ upon discovering the pleasure of it.

Everyone carefully checked the details out and abruptly scolded him, “What sort of trashy item is that? Throw it!”

“Disgraceful!”

“It’s not half bad!” Gu Fei said cheerily. He had somehow found some joy in getting a contrasting reaction from them. In actuality, Nightmare of Death’s dropped ring was also a decent item, yet it appeared rather shabby when compared to Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath. Since he dared to flaunt a decent item before them, these experts felt quite insulted.

“Coordinates,” Sword Demon cut in just at the height of their uproar.

Before Gu Fei could reply, Sword Demon suddenly said, “Oh. No need anymore. I’ve spotted him.”

Over by Yunduan City’s south gate, Nightmare of Death had an uneasy expression on his face. He seemed to be waiting for someone.

“You lost Lasting Sentence Dying Breath? F*ck! How bad is your luck?!” one of his friends sighed privately when they heard what had happened.

“That’s depressing, and you lost them both in one go, too.”

“Where are you now? Be careful so that he doesn’t find you!”

“I’ve gotten his ‘Bounty Mission’, so I know that he’s still far from me!” Nightmare of Death informed.

“You’ve got his, but he’s got yours, too. That means he’s also

aware of where you're currently at!" another friend reminded him.

"Ahhh..." Nightmare of Death realized how moronic he was being.

Chapter 245 - Gu Fei's Update and Sword Demon's Patience

Nightmare of Death had rich PvP experience, so he promptly activated Stealth upon his companion's warning. He then moved to the side and looked all around him, checking if someone was coming to hunt him.

Sword Demon was aggrieved!

He had activated Stealth when he had spotted Nightmare of Death to begin his assault. Who knew that Nightmare of Death would activate his Stealth as well when Sword Demon was just two meters away from him? Sword Demon felt frustrated and regretful; he would have activated Fleetfoot instead to kill off the target had he known of Nightmare of Death's intention. Since he had gotten used to starting his fights by activating Stealth, he had also reflexively done it right now. As a veteran gamer, my fighting style should not be this monotonous and should have variety! Sword Demon deeply reflected on this.

Sword Demon did not give up still. He tentatively poked the space before him with his dagger once he got to where Nightmare of Death had been moments ago. As expected, he did not manage to find his target.

Nightmare of Death had left his original position the instant he had activated Stealth. As a precaution for the possibility of a Mage bombarding the area with AOE spells, Nightmare of Death positioned himself several meters away from his original spot and quietly observed his surroundings.

Plenty of people were coming and going under the city gate; everyone looked suspicious, yet not one of them slowed down as they went about their businesses. Only Sword Demon on Stealth was suspicious in the area, but Nightmare of Death naturally could not see him.

“How’s everything on your end?” Gu Fei inquired when he figured that it was about time for Sword Demon to finish his target.

“He ran off! He activated Stealth just as I was about to stab him!” Sword Demon shared with dismay. This was the first time the Thief Sword Demon felt resentful toward the Stealth skill that he was very adept with. This sentiment was shared by a majority of players, but the game officials’ response was that numerous equipment and skills that could help them counter Stealth existed in-game, yet no one had discovered anything that could do that even now at level 40.

A Hunter’s Hunting Trap was rather effective against Stealth, so that could be considered as a counter for it. The problem was that the contraption itself was far more eye-catching than a Thief on Stealth, so it was uncertain which one was really the counter for which!

When Gu Fei heard this, he quickly checked Nightmare of Death’s latest coordinates through his ‘Bounty Mission’ and told Sword Demon, “He hasn’t run off yet; he’s still in that area!”

Sword Demon felt stunned. Knowing that Gu Fei could see his target’s coordinates, he hurriedly asked, “What’s his current coordinates?”

Gu Fei reported the coordinates to him.

The coordinates were not for a precise spot but for a small area. Nightmare of Death was still in the coordinates he had been a minute ago. Sword Demon looked at the reported direction and saw that it was by the root of the city gate’s wall. He had more or less determined Nightmare of Death’s intention.

“This guy must have realized the possibility of someone launching an attack on him, so he entered Stealth to hide in a corner. He’s pretty lucky to escape my dagger when it was almost on him.”

Sword Demon believed that Nightmare of Death had not discovered him. He had been stalking Nightmare of Death from the start under Stealth and he had never seen the latter turn around. Nightmare of Death would have no way of spotting Sword Demon unless he had a counter for Stealth.

If that was truly the case, Nightmare of Death would definitely use this chance to attack him, instead. He would not take the extra effort of positioning himself over to that wall, which was the best position for him to observe the people coming and going.

After confirming that Nightmare of Death had not discovered him yet, Sword Demon gripped his Frost Memories tightly. He carefully avoided the flow of players as he made his way over to that side of the wall. For the Stealth skill, any form of contact between players or NPCs would cancel it; this included the attacks ditched by a person or NPC to a Thief on Stealth and vice versa.

Skill interruption in Parallel World varied. Certain skills, like the Mage's AOE spells or an Archer's shot cycle, could be interrupted upon activation. Once an attack was unleashed, however, the skill itself would no longer be disrupted or affected no matter what sort of attack was done to a user.

Of course, discrepancies existed due to the different nature of skills of the various job classes in Parallel World. For example, spells directly depended upon the caster's mana and spell mastery, which would be rendered useless once the caster was killed. This was different from an Archer; an arrow fired off by an Archer would still kill or injure its target despite the Archer dying off. Even an arrow on Homing Projectile would continue to pursue its target as if the skill was avenging its master's death – at least until the duration of the skill ended.

Besides ranged attacks, certain melee skills that required the users to personally employ them could be interrupted by anything that restricted or entirely stopped their movement. One example was the Warrior's Cyclone; if a claymore happened to cut into a big

tree and got stuck in it while under Cyclone, the skill would not continue, as the tree essentially interrupted its progress.

Since melee skills were often employed by the users, the users had the privilege to interrupt or stop the skills themselves. This was what players called 'skill cancel'; it was a technique that players must master if they wished to successively attack with melee skills. Archers and Mages did not have such 'skill cancel', as taking back their attacks once they had cast spells or had shot arrows was impossible.

In short, the rules for interrupting attacks varied due to the unique characteristics of each skill and not due to the job classes being different from one another. Just take Stealth as an example; the skill was non-combat, so it could easily be interrupted. In fact, a mere touch was all it took to cancel Stealth.

Sword Demon stepped in the area covered by the coordinates Nightmare of Death was squatting over and began to tentatively poke the surrounding air with his Frost Memories, preparing to tackle the latter down once he found him.

Nightmare of Death indeed did not know that Sword Demon was currently piercing the surrounding air to counter his Stealth. After closely watching different people come and go under the city gate, he deduced that none of them intended to attack him and could not help but wonder if he had been overly paranoid. Despite this, he never considered canceling his Stealth. After all, he judged it better to err on the side of caution. He was even able to chat with his friends, so he was not worried that they would be unable to find him.

What was more; Nightmare of Death did not stand in one place foolishly. He knew that if Gu Fei wanted to deal with him, he would surely send people over to his coordinates. Once Gu Fei realized that he was on Stealth, a Mage's well-placed AOE spell would be all it took to find him. Thus, Nightmare of Death constantly changed his position by going in a big circle or shifting

about.

His luck was truly pretty good; just as he changed his position, the tip of Sword Demon's dagger narrowly brushed past him, almost causing him to get discovered. Sword Demon still did not know that Nightmare of Death was constantly changing his position, so he continued to search around him like a blind man. When Gu Fei informed him of Nightmare of Death's latest coordinates, Sword Demon could not help but curse, "This f*ck*r!" He then poked around in a different direction. Fortunately, his Stealth mode prevented anyone from seeing him search the place like a blind man touching an elephant; otherwise, it would have been too comical a sight.

Nightmare of Death was being very cautious. He kept on moving about as best as he could, confusing Gu Fei of his changing coordinates. Thinking that Gu Fei would only see minute change in the set of coordinates every time it got updated, Nightmare of Death simply moved around in a small area while on Stealth; Nightmare of Death even wondered what sort of expression Gu Fei had now and he could barely hold back his laughter.

It was then that he thought of something, The 'Bounty Mission' refresh rate for my coordinates is every five minutes, so what was the point of me constantly moving about? There must be plenty of times where my effort was inconsequential since he did not even see it; I'm just busying myself over nothing! At the same time, he also thought, I doubt an enemy nearby would still continue to target me after being annoyed by my constant movement. It was not as if Nightmare of Death had not considered the possibility of a Thief on Stealth targeting him despite not spotting any suspicious character all this while.

His judgment was spot on, yet there were two factors he was not privy of. First, Gu Fei had Windchaser's Emblem, so the 'Bounty Mission' refresh rate for his coordinates was only one minute. Second, while a Thief on Stealth was indeed near him, this Thief

was tenacious beyond imagination.

It was only logical for the heavens to reward those who worked hard. Nightmare of Death's originally diligent changing of position had made it so that Gu Fei and Sword Demon were unable to locate him at all. Once laziness set in, he began to stand on one spot for over a minute. It was at this point that he felt something lightly brush his back.

Nightmare of Death had already lost his vigilance at this point. Casually cocking his head backward, just as he saw the bluish glow of Sword Demon's Frost Memories plunge straight toward his neck. Such a ferocious move looked as if Sword Demon had wanted to decapitate Nightmare of Death directly.

While Sword Demon was indeed very patiently searching for the target all this time, it did not mean that he was unaffected by the matter. Sword Demon's frustration had already accumulated to the tipping point. His mind had already simulated a hundred and eighty ways to horrendously assassinate Nightmare of Death, so his one stab at this moment erupted at a speed even greater than Gu Fei's.

When Nightmare of Death adorably cocked his head, his neck was perfectly exposed to Sword Demon's vicious slice. Naturally, the blood and gore in-game were not vividly depicted, and it was even further tweaked after Parallel World's official release. Logically speaking, Sword Demon's cut would have sliced the main artery of Nightmare of Death's neck open. The gushing blood should have spouted like a fountain. And yet, only a little spurt of blood could currently be seen to indicate that the dagger had indeed struck its target.

The ferocious move was so oppressive that it drained Nightmare of Death of his will to retaliate. He simply activated Fleetfoot to flee from his assailant fast.

Unfortunately for Nightmare of Death, Sword Demon was the

one currently after him and not Gu Fei. Sword Demon was more proficient in Fleetfoot than Nightmare of Death, so his base movement speed was naturally faster than the latter, too. Once Sword Demon activated his Fleetfoot, he promptly stuck to Nightmare of Death like his shadow and ruthlessly plunged his dagger on the small of the latter's back.

The two bloodied the street from one end to another. Nightmare of Death left a bloody trail on the road until he finally collapsed. Before he disappeared, he even reached out his hand down the street, his eyes brimming with expectancy to what lay beyond. Understanding dawned on Sword Demon when he glanced at the direction of his outstretched hand. The warehouse lay right ahead of them. This person had wanted to toss his items into the warehouse before he died, yet his speed was unfortunately slower than Sword Demon's.

“He he!” Sword Demon laughed to himself darkly as he looted the two items Nightmare of Death had dropped on his death.

Chapter 246 - A Gloomy Day

There would occasionally be dark and gloomy days in a person's life. For Nightmare of Death, today was that day – an extremely dark and gloomy day.

He had previously been bullied in the Thieves' Union by Gu Fei. Nightmare of Death had considered that as the darkest day of his in-game life, especially when he had been relentlessly chased all over the streets of Yunduan City by Gu Fei. But when that day was compared to today, the loss Nightmare of Death had experienced back then was mere chicken feed.

Since he still had 5 PK points, Nightmare of Death's two deaths reduced his level from 40 to 36. With how the needed experience points increased with every level up, just his drop of a level right now was equivalent to all the experience points he had lost last time.

His PK value had caused him to lose a total of five items. Among the dropped items, Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath were rare top-grade equipment that Nightmare of Death had not even used yet. The other three items were not as precious, but they were still worth hundreds of gold coins.

However, his tragic situation had yet to end as he still had those abominable PK points. As long as he did not log off, Gu Fei would continue to hunt him down. And even if he did log off, Nightmare of Death doubted that the Thief just then would give up. Has he been sniffing around me all that time? The Thief's level of perseverance brought a chill down Nightmare of Death's spine. Heading to a log-off point now would only expose his position to the two, and that Thief would surely just patiently wait for him to come online.

Nightmare of Death recognized Sword Demon. He was a top-class expert in other MMOs who had been a victim of his group's

money-making scheme in Parallel World. The man had every reason to crush Nightmare of Death in the palm of his hands, so Nightmare of Death was not thinking of avoiding the problem; instead, he was thinking of how to take revenge and trap Gu Fei in order to recover Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath.

This was not due to his attachment to the items but was due to it being his job. Nightmare of Death was a member of a gold-farming gaming workshop. His account, gaming equipment, salary, et cetera were provided by the gaming workshop's boss. His boss's primary order was to help him earn money, earn money, and earn more money... PKing players to loot their top-grade equipment was just one of the many methods they used to earn money.

From this perspective, Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath did not actually belong to Nightmare of Death but to the boss, who would decide what to do with the items upon receiving them. The more valuable the top-grade equipment was, the more important it was for them to turn it over to the boss.

This was actually the first time Nightmare of Death had gotten such top-grade equipment. His greed got the better of him, and in hopes of earning a little side income, he did not even equip the daggers himself but searched for a way to sell them off, instead.

Trade Exchange? Auction House? Those places were not viable. Once the items were put on sale, his name would be featured right next to them. This sort of under-the-table transaction was forbidden in a gaming workshop, and it was almost guaranteed that anyone who would do such thing would be fired. This might just be a game for many, but this was Nightmare of Death's livelihood, so he could not be careless on how he handled this.

Naturally, his colleagues were in the dark about Nightmare of Death's intention to keep the equipment for himself. Only two companions of his knew about his intention, and neither was his colleague. Nightmare of Death truly wanted to retrieve Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath soon, yet he could not depend on the

gaming workshop's strength. This was because the rule stated that they must immediately inform the workshop of any valuable items when they first obtained them. Nobody knew about the existence of Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath, so if Nightmare of Death were to report it now, his intention would come to light... His colleagues might understand why Nightmare of Death had withheld information about the equipment, but....

Nightmare of Death would not be so flustered if the enemies in question would just quietly take and use the items for themselves after looting them. Unfortunately, he did not believe that this would be the case with Gu Fei and company.

Nightmare of Death and his team were currently reviled throughout Yunduan City to the point of causing everyone's teeth to itch whenever they were mentioned. Just the act of looting top-grade equipment from them would elicit schadenfreude from the people who would hear about it. From this point alone, Nightmare of Death reckoned that the person in question would find a chance to announce his bad deed everywhere he went. Not only would the masses be cursing him endlessly, he would even be kicked out of the gaming workshop under corruption charges. How could Nightmare of Death not think that today was a truly dark and gloomy day at this rate?

As such, his current priority was to quickly snatch back Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath. Everything would be fine once he retrieved the goods and turned them over to the organization. If he were to head back empty-handed and report about the equipment he had lost, no one would certainly believe him. At present, Nightmare of Death was no longer thinking of earning a quick buck on the side; all he wanted was to secure his job. As for the issue of mistrust that would arise from this, he would think about that later!

Nightmare of Death activated Stealth as he walked along the street. He no longer dared to be careless and moved as fast as he

could while on Stealth. At the same time, he sent his two friends a message: “Don’t head to the city gate....”

“You got killed again...” His friends grieved for his loss.

“Yeah, where are you guys at? I’ll go to you two, instead!” Nightmare of Death said as he kept himself on the move.

“We just went past the main plaza by Picker Street,” his friend replied.

“I’m coming. Do you have any clothes on you?” Nightmare of Death asked.

“F*ck! Are you butt naked now?!”

Nightmare of Death was in tears. Sword Demon’s stab had cost him his clothes. He was only wearing a flimsy shirt and pants when he revived by the spawn point. It was utterly embarrassing. With how the shirt and pants looked, Nightmare of Death would be better off stark naked.

Fortunately, he had Stealth! Nightmare of Death sure was optimistic, being able to find something to be happy about despite his current destitute state.

Nightmare of Death met his friends at Picker Street, yet he did not reveal himself to them. Maintaining his Stealth state, he said to his friends, “Over here!”

His friends could naturally not see him, but they could hear his voice drifting out from their surrounding area. “Can you stop moving about?” the two were irked. By the sound of his voice, Nightmare of Death seemed to be going around the two of them.

“No can do! It’s too dangerous! Don’t speak unnecessarily, too. Pretend I’m not here. We’ll talk through the private chatbox.” Nightmare of Death was taking every possible precaution right now. Perhaps, Sword Demon is near me... was what he was thinking.

“You two should keep walking. I’ll follow behind,” Nightmare of Death said.

Hence, his two friends began walking as Nightmare of Death asked, “Have you found someone appropriate?”

“I’ve posted the mission description, but there’s no reply yet. Guess we’ll hafta wait. Shall we wait by the Hall of Mercenaries?” one of his friends asked.

Nightmare of Death needed to attack Gu Fei, yet he did not have enough manpower to do so. Gu Fei was someone who could not be killed by a dozen or so players, so he could only look for external aid for this matter. Hiring a mercenary group was the most efficient method. The problem was that Nightmare of Death required someone who could PvP. The usual bunch of honest and peaceful mercenary groups out there would not accept such a mission. The larger mercenary groups would be even more unwilling to take on this sort of mission as they paid attention to their image. Expressly accepting such a mission would be tantamount to going against the generally accepted notion of justice. But while no one would openly accept this sort of mission, people would still talk about it privately.

There was of course no way of putting up a mission about PvP through the system, but how was that a problem for the intelligent players?

In Yunduan City, there was a quest called ‘Punishing Pudgy Keith’. This quest was so easy that no one needed to hire help for it. Those who would create a mission for this quest meant that the employers were looking for help to PvP. ‘Pudgy Keith’ had the initials of ‘P’ and ‘K’, which indirectly referred to ‘player killing’! Any mercenary group that saw this mission would promptly understand its true nature, so everyone would conduct a transaction about it privately.

Nightmare of Death had asked his friends to put up a mission for

‘Punishing Pudgy Keith’, and they had specifically described the players needed for it. Going up against Gu Fei was difficult due to his fast movement speed and Blink skill; ranged job classes could not kite him, while melee job classes were in danger of being kited by him. Moreover, he seemed to be able to detect Thieves on Stealth. After thinking about it, Nightmare of Death felt that the safest and most effective method to deal with Gu Fei was to use the Hunting Trap skill.

Although the chances of traps being discovered were currently high, most players already knew of how to manually bury or hide their traps. If it was just one trap, there was no guarantee of his target falling prey to it... What if there were more traps, then?

Thus, for this mission, Nightmare of Death specified the need for players with high proficiency in the Hunting Trap skill. If there’s a mercenary group skilled at using traps, it would be perfect. Better if those players can coordinate well with one another to create an intricate formation of traps, was what Nightmare of Death was hoping for.

Currently, the ones famous for having perfectly coordinated formations in Yunduan City were Carouse with its spell bombardment and Traversing Four Seas with its archer formation. While Nightmare of Death felt it would be perfect if either of them was able to help out with their ambush, these mercenary groups belonged to two large guilds respectively, which would surely cost him a hefty price. Furthermore, the probability of some players among them being Nightmare of Death’s past ‘clients’ was high. Although he always carefully hid himself whenever they PKed, some would still manage to catch a glimpse of him, just like Sword Demon had had. Would Nightmare of Death not be courting death if he chanced upon a player whom he had victimized in the past?

In the end, the trap method was still the most economical, safest, and most realistic plan. He just did not know if they could find such mercenaries.

As they made their way over to the Hall of Mercenaries, one of his friends suddenly messaged him: “Someone contacted me!”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, the person said his mercenary group is the most skilled at using the Hunting Trap skill!”

“Are you for real?!” Nightmare of Death overflowed with elation. He had merely been hoping to hire such mercenary group, as the chances of a bunch of players having prowess at the Hunting Trap skill were low. Each player could only lay trap out one at a time, and the trap could only clamp on one target. Frankly speaking, the game had yet to reach the stage where such a specialized group of trappers would be needed. He wondered... What sort of eminent expert out there had such broad view to train a troop of trappers this early in the game?

“Where are they?” Nightmare of Death excitedly asked.

“They are in the Hall of Mercenaries, waiting for us!” his friend replied.

Chapter 247 - The Air of Expert Trappers

Outside the Hall of Mercenaries, Nightmare of Death on Stealth and his two friends immediately spotted someone standing at the agreed upon rendezvous point. Instantly, he felt his heart chilled at the sight of the person.

Using Sword Demon as an example, although he was not a good looking person, the air of an expert could easily be felt when he lifted his dagger or even when he was merely standing by motionlessly. As for this person before them, he was entirely nondescript, and there was not a hint of an imposing temperament coming from him; instead, he was skeevy-looking. Nightmare of Death suddenly felt extremely reluctant to rest the fate of his job on the shoulders of such a person.

“Is that the guy?” Nightmare of Death asked his friend on the private chatbox. Worried that Sword Demon was nearby, Nightmare of Death kept his distance from his two friends as they traveled along. Although they were now at the Hall of Mercenaries, they were more than eight feet away from it. Nightmare of Death was not worried that Sword Demon would figure out his connection to his two friends, so he had these two do all the arrangement secretly!

“That can’t be...” One of his friends hesitated as he saw the mousy look of the person before them, “My contact said that he is a Hunter, but that guy seems to be a Mage!”

“Oh... Let’s wait some more, then!” Nightmare of Death sighed in relief.

Who knew that just as his two friends moved to wait by the spot, the Mage actually approached them, “Gentlemen, are you waiting for White Leaf Plumage?”

The two men felt stunned, as that was indeed the IGN of the player who had contacted them. As the two skeptically nodded

their heads and were about to ask a question, the man began to explain, “He happens to have something on and took his leave. I am his friend, so you can approach me about that matter of yours. We are in the same mercenary group, after all.”

“Oh, how should we address you?” one of Nightmare of Death’s friends asked.

The man meekly replied, “My name is unimportant, so let’s just discuss the matter at hand!”

The person’s reply made him seem moronic. With his downcast eyes and downright passive words, he seemed intent on avoiding the question and getting on with the business at hand. Nightmare of Death’s friends could not make sense of him and could only say, “Based on the mission we have put up, I think you guys more or less got the gist of it; we’re looking to borrow your Hunting Trap skill to PK someone.”

“That’s not a problem. My band of brothers is definitely the best when it comes to the Hunting Trap skill. You’ve made the right choice finding us.” The person thumped his chest as he firmly declared this.

“To brag about his group’s skill without even asking for who the target is... This guy is taking things too lightly. I don’t think we can depend on this guy too much...” one of Nightmare of Death’s friends criticized when he relayed the conversation to him in private.

“Yeah... Just go through the motions with them and we’ll find someone else after!” Nightmare of Death shared the same sentiment with his friend. Just this one conversation showed how undependable the person was. He was even more certain of this when the person regarded the matter so flippantly. Nightmare of Death had some knowledge of how most mercenary groups operated, and this person’s way of negotiating with them clearly displayed his unprofessionalism.

As his friends were about to blow the Mage off, the latter suddenly pointed toward a direction, “That’s perfect. Bring any questions you have about traps to him. I don’t know much about that skill since I’m actually a Mage.”

Nightmare of Death’s friends gazed over in the direction the man had pointed to and saw an even more reprehensible man gazing at them listlessly while tilting his head. He was undoubtedly an Archer from his getup. When the Mage motioned for him to come over, the Archer eagerly strode over.

Uninterested, Nightmare of Death’s friends were about to disengage from this exchange when they suddenly received a message from him, “Wait a sec. Is the guy coming over together with them?”

“Yes!” his friends replied in unison.

“Proceed with the deal, then!” Nightmare of Death was excited once more.

“What?” his friends asked, baffled. The Archer who had joined them looked sleazier compared to the Mage, so they could not understand just what Nightmare of Death saw in the person that abruptly changed his mind.

“I know that guy. There are three Yunduan City players high up on the Archer leaderboard: Royal God Call, Youthful Reflection, and Sakurazaka Moony. He is Sakurazaka Moony, so if he has advanced to a Hunter, he will definitely be very skilled at setting traps. Where else would we find anyone better in terms of the Hunting Trap skill in Yunduan City?” Nightmare of Death sent over this reply.

Nightmare of Death’s two friends were quite convinced upon hearing this. To think that the youth before them was someone who had managed to make it on the top 20 in his job class... They hurriedly flattered him appropriately; this was something that the two would do whenever they exchanged words with an expert.

Unexpectedly, Sakurazaka Moony waved them off. “Nahhh. I recently dropped a level, so I don’t have the Hunting Trap skill. I’ve yet to level my way back to level 40....”

The two men were dumbfounded and were about to inform Nightmare of Death of this when Sakurazaka Moony continued, “Still, many members in my mercenary group have the Hunting Trap skill, so I don’t necessarily need to set the trap myself. It’ll be fine as long as I’m supervising the whole process.”

The two relayed this to Nightmare of Death, who readily agreed, “Mhm-mhm. Indeed, the trap method should still work. Nothing much is needed to be said; the most important aspect of the skill is its placement and positioning. He should be able to instruct his men with or without the skill himself. With such an expert at the helm, there shan’t be any problems!”

This matter was entirely dependent on Nightmare of Death, and his friends were nothing but helpers. Since the real employer, Nightmare of Death, approved of Sakurazaka Moony, the two did not have any further opinions and merely asked, “So how many Hunters do you have?”

“How many do you need?” Sakurazaka Moony answered with a question.

“There must be enough to trap someone 100%. How many people do you need to make that happen?” At the start, the mercenary business was just a matter of one side paying the fee and another providing the necessary manpower. As the market developed, more and more conditions were included to the transaction. The difficulty of a mission, the time required, the amount of manpower needed, the capability of the men, and so on were details that affected the service payment. Naturally, this process would not be so complex if it went through the system, but all these factors came into play when it was a private transaction like this.

“Who’s the person you’re up against?” Sakurazaka Moony asked.

Since he was asking questions and replying far more professionally than the Mage, the two men answered sincerely, “Thousand Miles Drunk!”

The Mage and Sakurazaka Moony froze on the spot when they heard this.

Nightmare of Death and his friends had already expected such a reaction. After all, the target was the so-called number one expert in Yunduan City! While people would think of this as an exaggeration, Nightmare of Death believed it to be the truth after crossing paths with Gu Fei several times. At the very least, he could not think of another player in the city who could handily deal with ten enemies at once. Upon naming a top-tier expert as their target, Nightmare of Death was worried that this for-hire helper would back out; Nightmare of Death was extra scared of that happening as he was truly in dire need of top-caliber experts like the one before him.

Unfortunately, Nightmare of Death must provide their possible helpers the target’s name. He could not just say something like: “His name is unimportant, so let’s just focus on settling the matter with him.” Although Sakurazaka Moony’s Mage originally said that there was no need to talk about IGNs, the target was the reason for this whole transaction; therefore, it was impossible to set the price for this mission without mentioning the target’s IGN.

“So it’s that b*st*rd. I’ll give you guys a 20% discount!” Sakurazaka Moony returned to his senses after that brief pause.

The two friends of Nightmare of Death were equally fearful of Sakurazaka Moony backing out upon hearing the target’s name, so they were pleasantly surprised when Sakurazaka Moony did the opposite and hurriedly informed Nightmare of Death of his agreement.

Nightmare of Death was of course very happy to hear this and rushed to say, “Don’t mind the price. Just get them to quickly

gather the required manpower to deal with this matter! That Thousand Miles Drunk is sure to return soon.”

Gu Fei’s coordinates were still at Suoyun Village. Since the level 70 grinding map was quite far from the city, it would take quite some time for him to travel back. Logically speaking, the grinding map would be further away the higher level the monsters were. Nightmare of Death believed that Gu Fei would either hurry back to finish his ‘Bounty Mission’ or gather his friends to continue the hunt for him, which gave them the perfect chance to lure Gu Fei in. Would he still let himself be used as bait like before? Although Nightmare of Death was unwilling, he could only steel his heart to not let his 5 PK points be for naught.

When his two friends mentioned that they could lure Gu Fei to the agreed-upon place themselves, they were able to reduce the price for this mission a bit more. With that, they no longer haggled with the price as per Nightmare of Death’s instruction.

“Where would you be most confident to set the trap up?”

“Since you guys are able to control the target’s path, then there are many places to choose from,” Sakurazaka Moony answered.

“It’s somewhere outside the city, right? Let’s continue this discussion on our way to a suitable spot.”

“He he...” Sakurazaka Moony chuckled, “The closest place will be inside the city.”

“In the city? But all the roads in the city are paved, how are you guys gonna set traps here?” While setting up traps on paved roads was possible, the traps would easily be spotted by people with eyes, rendering the Hunting Trap skill useless.

“He he... I’ve told you that we are experts! Come and follow me!” Sakurazaka Moony turned to call for the Mage, “F*ck*ng hell! Where did that b*st*rd Xiaobai¹ go?! Isn’t he the one who took this mission?!”

“He just saw a lady called Special Water Sprite, so Xiaobai went over to take a look,” the Mage replied.

“Why didn’t you go after him, then?”

“How could I catch up to him?” the Mage replied miserably. Just as the men were about to leave the Hall of Mercenaries, an Archer emerged from a corner of the street and immediately ran toward them. The man glanced at Nightmare of Death’s two friends and extended his hand, “How do you do? Name’s White Leaf Plumage. How’s the discussion?”

Nightmare of Death’s two friends extended their hands respectively, “We are about to go prepare the traps.”

White Leaf Plumage nodded his head cheerily. He then waggled his eyebrow to his companions before boasting, “Hey! That chick isn’t half bad!”

“Did you get her name?”

“Nope, but she stepped right on to my trap. HA HA HA HA!”

These players are getting more immoral than the last! Is this the temperament needed to be an expert trapper? Nightmare of Death and his two friends wondered to themselves.

Chapter 248 - The Mysterious T-zone

Nightmare of Death's two friends followed Sakurazaka Moony to prepare the traps; naturally, being the bait that he was, Nightmare of Death did not accompany them, and he instead strove to do a proper job of his role.

Nightmare of Death was very clear that he had to find Gu Fei and retrieve Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath from him. Since this was just a 'Bounty Mission' to Gu Fei, it was not something he must accomplish.

After their encounter at Suoyun Village, Gu Fei would certainly be on guard against Nightmare of Death. Currently, the wisest move for Gu Fei was to wash his hands off this matter entirely and to not bother with Nightmare of Death. After all, he already had quite the haul from him. At the very least, this was what Nightmare of Death would have done in Gu Fei's place.

Nightmare of Death had already been thinking of how to reel Gu Fei in ever since he had come up with the scheme, and finding the manpower to set up the traps had only been a secondary worry of his. After hearing his companions' opinions back in the city gate, his feelings had been all over the place.

While Nightmare of Death was afraid of people hunting him, as his death would lose him equipment and levels due to his 5 PK points, he was more hopeful of someone looking for him, as that would mean that Gu Fei had not given up on him and that he still had a chance to take down Gu Fei.

That was also why Nightmare of Death had previously chosen to activate Stealth and loiter at the city gate instead of leaving the area at the first opportunity. He actually did not need to wait for his friends by the city gate at the risk of his life, as they could easily contact one another privately. Nightmare of Death's real goal back then was to verify if Gu Fei was still after him.

There was naturally no need for him to sacrifice his life just to confirm this; hence, he had constantly been changing his position. And yet, he had not been able to find any suspicious person until it was too late. For a Thief on Stealth to appear behind him in that way, Nightmare of Death had felt all sorts of extreme human emotions back then.

At the cost of his equipment and level, he was able to confirm Gu Fei's intention to relentlessly hunt for him.

Ever since then, Nightmare of Death was suspicious of Sword Demon being beside him, yet he still had no way of dealing with him. Actually, Sword Demon was easier to deal with compared to the formidable Gu Fei. Nightmare of Death only had to ask his colleagues in the gaming workshop to ambush Sword Demon and reduce him to nothing more than a blip on his radar. His coworkers were skilled PvPers, after all.

Nightmare of Death could be said to have purposely allowed Sword Demon to keep watch over him all for the purpose of fooling Gu Fei into thinking that he no longer had any schemes left. Sword Demon and Nightmare of Death were unable to see each other right now, but if Sword Demon had been near him all this time, he would be able to ascertain where Nightmare of Death was heading and draw his conclusions from it.

Since his friends were now setting up traps for Gu Fei, Nightmare of Death had to bring his tail away from their place of ambush by constructing a believable narrative through his movement. For instance, he could head over to the Auction House to check for suitable equipment... Since Nightmare of Death lost all his equipment, acquiring new ones should indeed be his first priority.

Just like how the cities in reality had their prosperous and destitute sides that many were unaware of, the cities in-game also had these sides. Nightmare of Death's two friends followed Sakurazaka Moony to a T-junction far from the bustling city's main streets. The streets here were in poor condition; the

cobblestones were missing a few in some places, revealing the dirt beneath as weeds and wild plants grew all over.

“Going through here, taking the first turning on the right... followed by the second turning on the left, you will find yourself at the Archer Range. This is the shortest route to the log-off point from the south gate,” Sakurazaka Moony explained to the two men.

“Tsk! York Alley is the shortest route, man!” someone dissented. About ten players arrived to join the group as they spoke, and all of them were sleazy-looking Hunters.

“B*llsh*t! Rick Street is the shortest!” Many contrasting opinions were given on this matter.

When Nightmare of Death’s two friends heard them argue about this matter, they felt as if they had not truly lived their lives thus far. The two might have been hanging in Yunduan City for as long as them, yet they had never once heard any of the mentioned street names.

“Guys, stop squabbling and be professional!” Sakurazaka Moony admonished.

No one clearly heard his words as they continued to argue among themselves, even posing a question amid the chatter, “Where’s that b*st*rd gonna come from, anyway?”

Sakurazaka Moony turned his gaze on the two men, “We need to know which way you guys are expecting the target to emerge from.”

“We may need to see how the situation develops first,” the two men hedged. Actually, they were unsure of how to answer the question, since the place Nightmare of Death was at would be where Gu Fei would probably show up. Who knows which way he’s gonna come from? Plus, the place we are at is rarely frequented by players. There’s no telling if Thousand Miles Drunk

will even show up, was what the two were currently thinking.

“In that case, let’s go with this!” Sakurazaka Moony formed a triangle using the two corners of the street that they were in as its bases and the wall opposite them as its head. He then drew a cross in the middle of the triangle and said to Nightmare of Death’s two friends, “This is how we plan to do it. We only have one request, and that is to make sure that the target takes the turning. As long as he turns in from any direction, I guarantee that he will step on the traps.”

“Oh?” The two voiced their doubts, urging Sakurazaka Moony to elaborate.

“Look here, you two...” Sakurazaka Moony began to draw circles within the triangle, “We’ll place our traps here... over here... in this spot... and finally... here.” Sakurazaka Moony drew more than ten separate circles.

“No matter which way the target goes, as long as he takes this turn, he will step into our triangular zone trap. This T-zone trap may not look very dense, so you two can give it a try!” Sakurazaka Moony lifted the stick he had used to draw on the sand and declared, “No matter which way the target enters the T-zone, even if the first step misses, or the second step, then there’s the third step. If the third step misses, or even the succeeding steps... We’ll give you a full refund!”

The two of them were stunned as they stared at the triangle with the crosses and circles.

“Come on; give it a shot. See if you can avoid stepping on the circles. Go about any way you want! We haven’t set the traps yet, so you guys have nothing to worry about!” Sakurazaka Moony encouraged.

The two then tried it out, attempting to come into the triangular zone from any of the three directions, on the left as well as on the right. It was exactly as Sakurazaka Moony had said; no matter

which way they walked through it, they would step on to a marked circle in three or fewer steps.

“The circles... Will the traps really be that large?” one of the two asked as he stepped on to a circle.

“He he... This is a game; what else do you take it for? Even traps have AOE. As long as the target’s foot lands somewhere in the area, the trap will activate and restrict the person’s movement. Do you guys think that a person must step on a trap dead center to activate it?” Sakurazaka Moony asked.

“Oh....”

Sakurazaka Moony continued to happily explain, “Actually, if we have enough men on our side, this T-zone can be enlarged further. In that way, he’ll trigger a trap even if he’s just walking in a straight line. Unfortunately, we currently don’t have that many men. This is the best we can do that still have a 100% guarantee of success. Since we can’t stretch it all the way to the wall, our target must take this route. Only in that way can we catch him with surety. Can that person who’s acting as the bait do this?”

“This... It shan’t be a problem!” the two players felt that this particular aspect was something they could control.

“This is how we’re gonna set the traps, then.” With that, Sakurazaka Moony ordered the bickering players behind him, “Pipe down and stop your petty quarreling! Place your traps!”

Except for setting the traps, none listened to Sakurazaka Moony’s order to stop their bickering. It was at this point that Nightmare of Death’s two friends thought of something, “Wait a sec.”

“What is it?” Sakurazaka Moony gazed at them questioningly.

“While your T-zone is 100% guaranteed to work, our friend who is doing the luring of the target will also be unable to escape once he turns to this corner himself. What then?” the two asked.

“Oh! So that’s how you’re luring the enemy. You should’ve said

something earlier!” Sakurazaka Moony rearranged some of the circles inside the triangle and pointed at a particular spot, saying, “There wasn’t such a Y-shaped empty space originally, but since you want your friend to walk away unscathed, I’ll leave this path here free of traps for him. Tell him to be careful. It’s not my responsibility if he still steps on a trap.”

“This... How are we supposed to relay this to him?” The two were alarmed. The coordinates in the game were for an area. This entire triangular zone that Sakurazaka Moony had created was part of one set of coordinates. Telling Nightmare of Death of the area’s coordinates would not work. These two men felt at a loss on how to express in words the workings of the triangular zone.

“How about this...” Sakurazaka Moony used the stick once more to draw out a faint Y shape on the ground. “Tell him to step on the line drawn out here when he arrives; he definitely won’t trigger anything this way. Still, I can’t make it too obvious, so tell him to look closely. Is that guy’s vision alright?”

“It’s absolutely fine!” the two hurriedly replied.

“It’s settled, then! We’ll set the traps now, so you guys can lure the target over. The sooner we get this done, the sooner we can finish the mission!”

Sakurazaka Moony showed unwavering self-confidence as he spoke, which made Nightmare of Death’s two friends believe that he was a true expert. The aura he exuded changed once he started talking about the traps. It was just as Nightmare of Death had said; this person was indeed the number one expert trapper despite him dropping a level and temporarily being unable to set traps.

The two relayed all the information pertaining to the triangular zone trap to Nightmare of Death, reminding him to look for the Y-shaped outline on the ground. “You certainly won’t step on a trap if you tread on this outline to get across, so you better be careful!”

At this point in time, however, Sakurazaka Moony was bickering

with the members of his guild and mercenary group.

“F*ck me, Moony. What T-zone? Fabricating something like that... You’re such a sleazebag!”

“You even drew all those circles and crosses inside the T-zone. How shameless and despicable can you be?! No wonder you can’t find yourself a girl!”

“The AOE of Hunting Trap isn’t that wide; you’re just cheating these strangers!”

“F*ck*ng swindling our clients... How are we gonna continue doing business at this rate? We’ll surely fold and go under one of these days!”

“Stop your d*mn nagging and just get to work!” Sakurazaka Moony cursed on the mercenary channel.

“F*ck! Just where should I put it?! Why did you draw such a large circle?!” someone complained.

“Who told you guys to put it in the circles? Stuff them all in that Y-shaped outline!” Sakurazaka Moony ordered.

Chapter 249 - That Y-shaped Outline of Hope

Forever in Flowers' mercenary channel suddenly went quiet. Everyone clearly heard Sakurazaka Moony saying that the Y-shaped outline was the path left for the employer to escape the triangular zone. If they put the traps inside it instead, the person would need a miracle to come out of the path unscathed.

"Just who are our real employers?!" Everyone was baffled; they had clearly seen the two men handing coins to Sakurazaka Moony.

"Are we actually double agents?" someone guessed.

"That's so despicable!" all lambasted even as they continued to set the traps in the faint outline. Over a dozen men squeezed themselves into the triangular zone to prevent anyone outside from seeing what they were actually doing.

"It's done!" The men quickly dispersed as their traps were set up and buried properly. They were indeed highly skilled at setting traps, since not a trace could be seen of their buried traps on the ground. They once more outlined a Y shape on the ground by sprinkling dust over it, faintly indicating where the person should step to trigger the traps.

"Pretty well done!" Sakurazaka Moony nodded his head in satisfaction.

"Mmm. Let me give it a try!" The interest of Nightmare of Death's friends was piqued and one of them walked toward the Y-shaped outline to try it out. The bunch of Hunters threw a contemptuous look over to Sakurazaka Moony that seemed to say: "This is entirely your lousy plan's fault; see how it's about to get exposed!"

Sakurazaka Moony quickly blocked the player from proceeding toward the path, "Boss, please don't joke with us. If you try it out,

the faint outline we created will be destroyed. Since the whole area is now filled with traps, how are we going to redraw the outline? Unless you want us to redo the whole thing?”

“Don’t be like that; can’t you just redraw the Y-shaped outline as we move along it?” the person reasoned.

“But... Can you tell where the traps have been placed?” Sakurazaka Moony countered.

“Nope,” that person shook his head.

“And that’s exactly it. If you walk over the path and we redraw it, we can’t ensure that the line will be as accurate as before. We hafta dig out the traps and redo the whole thing if we wanna keep it precise,” Sakurazaka Moony explained.

Sakurazaka Moony’s reasoning sounded logical, so the person no longer insisted on trying the path. Sakurazaka Moony and his men sighed in relief.

“Alright, Moony. You’re pretty good at lying. We’ll give you that!” someone praised on the mercenary channel.

“Why haven’t you gotten a girl if you’re that good at lying?” everyone remarked, laughing.

“Not only has he got no girl to show, he even got tricked to death in a grinding map. HA HA HA HA HA!” everyone relentlessly mocked him.

Sakurazaka Moony was peeved, but it did not show on his face as he continued to banter with the two employers, “Respectable bosses, do you plan to kill the person once the traps are triggered?”

As Nightmare of Death’s friends nodded their heads in affirmation, Sakurazaka Moony raised his hand, “Alright. Since we don’t have something on, we’ll help you out in this matter. Brothers, ready your Homing Projectile!”

Everyone gamely agreed.

“Everyone, find a hiding spot!” Following his words, the men skillfully assisted one another up the nearby rooftops; anyone could tell that the men were experienced in this. Even the Mage showed an unusual adeptness at this. Everyone soon emptied out the street, leaving Nightmare of Death’s two friends on it. Gazing on the T-zone trap, the two felt a sense of dread overcome them.

“Do you two want to come up as well?” Sakurazaka Moony peeked out his head from a rooftop and asked this.

“Oh, thanks.” The two men were pulled up by some players atop a house. The scenery from above was pretty good; the hiding players on the rooftops around the street looked quite impressive at a glance.

“Everyone, get down. Only show yourselves after the Hunting Trap is triggered. The surrounding houses aren’t that high, so raising our heads will reveal us easily,” Sakurazaka Moony cautioned everyone.

“Everything is ready and in position. Remember, Y-shaped outline!” By the time Nightmare of Death received this message, he had already made it to the very street. He could only follow the given coordinates to arrive at the unfamiliar place, yet he kept walking into dead ends. He was starting to feel anxious that he had yet to locate the ambush spot, since Gu Fei’s set of coordinates was getting closer to him every time it refreshed.

“Just how do I get there?!” Nightmare of Death was on the verge of tears as he sent his friends this message.

His friends did not really know how to properly direct him to the location; they vaguely mumbled the coordinates for the place before asking Nightmare of Death for his current coordinates. They then uttered empty words of reassurance: “Oh, yeah. You’re almost there. Hurry up....”

Eventually, Nightmare of Death found the street with the T-shaped junction. Seeing that the entrance to the street was just

ahead, he slowed down his pace and calmly waited for Gu Fei to arrive. He recalled that Sword Demon should be somewhere near him. If Sword Demon took the initiative to strike him and he headed to the trap now, Gu Fei would not be here for the traps to spring. The target Nightmare of Death wanted to catch was Gu Fei, and he cared not for Sword Demon at all.

Nightmare of Death wanted to stall for time, but he was afraid that Sword Demon would take that chance to attack him. Thus, he zigzagged along the street while he waited anxiously for Gu Fei's coordinates to refresh. As Nightmare of Death continued to edge forward, he spotted a black-clothed figure at the other end of this lane. Their gazes met as the figure dashed toward him. Thousand Miles Drunk!

Nightmare of Death grew excited. The target was finally here, yet the direction of his approach was not ideal.

It would be best if Gu Fei approached the lane from the bottom of the T-shaped junction, since that would ensure that Gu Fei would step through the T-zone trap to get to Nightmare of Death. If Gu Fei was hot on his heels, Nightmare of Death could easily lure him into the zone. Right now, Nightmare of Death had no choice but to reach the turning first; otherwise, Gu Fei would just rush straight toward him.

He was almost at the street's entrance after zigzagging toward it just then. Nightmare of Death darted forward as he looked ahead. Thousand Miles Drunk's speed is really fast! Perhaps, he has already spotted me from across the street. Nightmare of Death knew that Stealth was useless against Gu Fei, so he strove to maintain his calm.

What nobody knew was that while Gu Fei could indeed detect a player in Stealth mode, it was only the player's presence; the player's state of mind would not matter at all. As such, Nightmare of Death's forceful projection of calmness was pointless.

Lowering his head to the ground, Nightmare of Death barely made out the faint Y-shaped outline that he had been told of; he could not help but praise the Hunters who had set the traps skillfully. There was no obvious indication that this patch of land even looked as if there were traps buried underneath it. Had it not been for the trap experts' prior warning, any regular player would have casually walked over it without a second thought. What a well-made path that gives people confidence and hope! My money was well-spent, indeed! Nightmare of Death was almost overwhelmed by his emotions. My day of gloom is finally at its end... With this thought in mind, he stepped right on to the Y-shaped outline.

SNAP! The clanking sound of metal echoed about. The crisp sound traveled past the muddy topsoil and pierced right through Nightmare of Death's heart. Confidence, hope, life, dreams... All these instantly shattered into oblivion, and his feelings for what had just happened cumulated into this one bellow: "YOU M*TH*RF*CK*NG B*ST*RDS!" He could not move with the Hunting Trap on him, and a thought formed in his mind: the struggle of a trapped beast.

Nightmare of Death's two friends heard his rage-filled bellow and thought that he was merely venting all his frustration on the trapped Gu Fei. The two then stood up and said, "We got him! Do it, everyone!"

"Got it!" Sakurazaka Moony nodded his head and extended his hands forward to lightly shove the two men. In the next instant, Nightmare of Death's friends found themselves plunging head-first to the ground below. They landed in a spectacular mess before regaining their bearings. They looked down the street and saw Nightmare of Death standing motionlessly on one spot. As for Gu Fei, he was also at the junction and was calmly regarding Nightmare of Death.

Sakurazaka Moony stood up from where he was and showed Gu

Fei an 'OK' sign with his hand. The Mage stood up from another rooftop and shouted to Gu Fei, "Drunk bro!"

"Yo, Fireball!" Gu Fei waved his hand toward the Mage even as a ball of fire formed on the tip of his fingers, which he quickly dissipated by performing a quick sword slash. "Long time no see!"

Drunk bro... With the Mage addressing Gu Fei in a familiar way, could they still misunderstand anything? Nightmare of Death's heart had long been reduced into ash. His target was formidable and he had many friends... How was he going to fight him? It appeared that he had no choice but to face the music now.

Meanwhile, the other players on the rooftops stood up and took in the scene below with grim expression on their faces. "Such a huge mobilization; I thought we were springing traps for a babe, but it turned out to be just for that guy!"

"Who is he, anyway? D*mn! He's not even wearing any clothes! Isn't that a little too unrestrained?" Nightmare of Death was still only wearing that flimsy shirt and pants.

Someone came to a sudden realization, "For him to run on the street practically naked, he must have gotten caught with his pants down with someone or something!"

"No wonder many of us got mobilized! It only made sense!" Everyone was enraged now.

"We have the adulterer, so where's the adulteress?!" someone asked aloud.

"I wonder who got cuckolded?" Everyone looked over to Sakurazaka Moony before glancing at Gu Fei.

"It couldn't be Moony; does he even have anyone to cuckold him?" Everyone laughed mockingly.

"Couldn't be that guy there, either. He's got a harem of over fifty ladies; why would he care about losing one or two?" another person quipped.

“You’re still wet behind the ears, son. Don’t you know that only a man who values his every conquest can successfully establish a harem?” someone sagely said, pretending to be well-versed in the affairs of the heart.

“Wet behind the ears, my *ss! Do you even have a woman to call yours?!”

As everyone bickered on, Sword Demon really appeared by the street’s entrance just as Nightmare of Death had been expecting. He had been tailing Nightmare of Death all this while, and the only reason he had not struck him even now was the latter’s diligence at changing his position this time round.

The players on the rooftops seemed to have found the reason for this large-scale mobilization with Sword Demon’s emergence. “Wow... Look at that guy’s face. It must be him.”

“With looks like that, it is no wonder he got cuckolded!”

“He’s truly lacking in the good-looks department, but he at least has that imposing temperament going for him.”

“Hmm... But it's nothing compared to us, of course.”

“Naturally!”

Thankfully, this entire conversation occurred on Forever in Flowers’ mercenary channel; otherwise, the people below would not even need to fight any longer. They could just die from coughing up excessive blood upon reading the wretched and abominable chatlogs of these players.

Chapter 250 - A Villain with Loyalty

What hope did Nightmare of Death have left?

On his right was Gu Fei holding a raised sword, and on his left was Sword Demon gripping a dagger firmly. Nightmare of Death's back was against the wall, while his friends lay sprawled on the ground before him after having been pushed off the rooftops. Over a dozen despicable Hunters stood on the rooftops; each acted as if he was a Sharpshooter, arching a bow with nocked arrow at Nightmare of Death. What was even more infuriating, though, was how some of them had the audacity to yawn and say, "It's boring to just shoot him!"

Nightmare of Death addressed the cheeky Sakurazaka Moony who was among the players on the rooftops, "What's the meaning of this?!" He currently felt no resentment toward Gu Fei as all his contempt was concentrated on Sakurazaka Moony.

Sakurazaka Moony flashed him a cheeky smile, "Do you now understand what 'trap' means? Placing a trap on the ground for a target to step on is just tasteless. As an expert trapper, it is essential for one to have a good grasp the target's mindset. Placating the person to obediently deliver himself or herself onto the set trap, that is the embodiment of 'trap'."

"Shameless!" Nightmare of Death contemptuously spat upon hearing this.

Sakurazaka Moony merely maintained his cheeky smile.

"Drunk bro, what's this guy's story, anyway? How did he offend you?" Fireball asked, standing at a distance.

"He's one of those equipment-looters," Gu Fei simply explained to everyone.

"Oh!" everyone finally understood the situation. Gu Fei or Sword Demon must have been targeted by this man.

Everyone was immediately up in arms, “Where did you hide the equipment you looted? Get all of them out and we’ll spare your life.”

“Tsk!” Nightmare of Death cared not for his life. Besides, he simply had no way of handing the looted equipment. Adopting a heroic posture, he disdainfully glared at them all.

“Just kill him; I’ll chase after him later to complete my ‘Bounty Mission’,” Gu Fei said.

“Why don’t you head over to the spawn point and wait for him there?” Sword Demon asked.

“It’s fine; I can easily catch up to him, anyway.” The two were clearly disregarding Nightmare of Death’s existence by discussing this matter in front of him.

“Xiaocan¹, have it out with them!” Nightmare of Death’s two friends butted into the scene at this moment. The two, who had also been played like a fiddle, could no longer stand for Nightmare of Death to be treated so lowly by the players around them.

Gu Fei was just about to engage the two into a fight when he heard Nightmare of Death yell out, “They have nothing to do with the matter between us! They’re just some friends I’ve asked for help at the last minute; come at me, instead!”

Gu Fei felt stunned. He did not know if Nightmare of Death was telling the truth, but his two friends were already on them, one targeting Sword Demon and the other striking at Gu Fei. Even if the two were uninvolved, Gu Fei and Sword Demon would not just passively take in their attacks and lifted their weapons to actively defend themselves.

The two’s skills were nothing to write home about, much less to the combat experts Gu Fei and Sword Demon. Sword Demon effortlessly blocked each strike as he glanced over to Gu Fei, searching for guidance on what to do in this situation.

“Don’t bother about me; you guys should run first!” Nightmare of Death tried making his friends flee.

“No! If you die, we’ll go down with you!” the two men answered firmly.

What strong loyalty... all thought to themselves. However, they soon blanched at the fact that such an admirable loyalty was actually found on their enemies, making them seem like the villains here.

“Man, even the bad guys in this day and age have such loyalty toward one another,” Sakurazaka Moony remarked.

This received his brothers’ derision, “Tsk! What are you pretending to be a good guy for?! Who are you trying to fool?!”

“That’s right! Moony doesn’t even have any sort of loyalty to begin with!”

“Hoes before bros!”

“Despicable! He forgoes loyalty as long as he can stand to benefit!”

“F*CK! You bunch of trash!” Sakurazaka Moony cursed. Soon after, the players on the rooftops were all hurling expletives at one another. Sakurazaka Moony was clearly on the losing side since it was him versus everyone else and suffered the unbridled castigations of all. In a bout of anger, he leaped down from where he was and pointed at Nightmare of Death, “Let me deal with this trashy person!”

Since he could not win the verbal war against his guild and mercenary group members, he decided to vent his frustration on the helpless Nightmare of Death. Besides, a target that was only wearing a flimsy shirt and pants was really easy to bully. Sakurazaka Moony had been wanting to try his hands on melee despite being an Archer.

“Look! That’s what I call despicable!” His brothers-in-arms saw

through his intention and they began to ridicule him even more.

As Nightmare of Death's two friends that were fighting with Gu Fei and Sword Demon were feeling unsure on how to proceed with all this, they suddenly heard Nightmare of Death shout, "Why would I let myself die at the hands of a b*st*rd like yourself?!"

With that, white light consumed Nightmare of Death and he instantly disappeared before them all.

Everyone on the rooftops was left mutely stunned by this. Meanwhile, the two pairs stopped their fight as they tried to wrap their heads around Nightmare of Death's sudden disappearance.

"Eh? A Teleportation Scroll?" Gu Fei guessed from his shallow gaming experience.

"No. That's not the same light produced by the use of a Teleportation Scroll." The veteran gamer Sword Demon naturally had a better grasp of what had just happened.

"That... That..." Sakurazaka Moony's gaming experience was not something to scoff at, either; he stood there unmoving for a while before saying, "That looks like the light produced when someone forcefully logs off!"

"Forcefully logs off?" everyone gasped in surprise.

"Wow. What a real piece of work!" the players on the rooftops began conversing once more.

"This is totally Moony's fault! That guy would rather risk the penalty for forcefully logging off instead of dying by his putrid hands. He he he!"

"Moony, you should realize by now how much of a b*st*rd you are! You should find a spot to follow suit with him!"

"Without a b*st*rd like you, Yunduan City will become a utopia! Amen!" someone clapped his hands together for dramatic effect.

"F*CK*NG SHUT THE F*CK UP!" Sakurazaka Moony bellowed.

He then directed his gaze on Gu Fei and Sword Demon, expressing his wish to inquire further. At the same time, he was feeling quite embarrassed, since Nightmare of Death indeed did shout about his unwillingness to die at his hands!

“Let’s forget about this, then!” With their main quarry evading them through such means, Gu Fei and Sword Demon had nothing left to say.

Nightmare of Death’s two friends were speechless for a while before suddenly launching themselves straight toward Sakurazaka Moony.

Sakurazaka Moony who was clearly taken aback by this sudden turn of events was currently left defenseless. With the two fully geared melee players, only death awaited an Archer like him.

The brothers who had been ridiculing Sakurazaka Moony this whole time shouted their warnings as each of them nocked arrows and fired them toward the two. Nonetheless, Gu Fei was still the quickest to save Sakurazaka Moony. Chanting the incantation for the Blink skill, he appeared before Sakurazaka Moony with his sword placed accurately to receive the two enemies’ attacks.

It all happened so fast that Gu Fei had been unable to employ a clever technique to resolve the attacks. This act of defending was the first time he had directly used his Strength to face against a strike. Gu Fei knew what was going to happen to him. Between his and the enemies’ attacks, his meager Strength would be judged to be on the losing side by Verdict.

Since two people were attacking together, Gu Fei simply had no means by which he could stop their attacks, bumping right into Sakurazaka Moony when he got pushed back by the force of the blows.

Sakurazaka Moony’s build was also one that had meager Strength; the sudden, forceful bump of Gu Fei immediately caused him to lose his footing and fall. This one fall had him grasping

wildly in the air to regain his balance, which resulted into him grabbing Gu Fei and bringing the latter down with him as well.

Despite being pulled to the ground, Gu Fei maintained his vigilance for any incoming attacks. In the next instant, however, a rain of arrows peppered the two men to their deaths in a brilliant glow; their last attacks were only centimeters away from Gu Fei and Sakurazaka Moony.

These seasoned gamers naturally did not really feel guilty about killing off the two supposedly innocent players, since they saw their action as merely defending their own. At this point of time, they were looking on the street with worry etched on their faces and were saying to one another, “Moony didn’t seem to have reacted in time; he was totally lost back there.”

“Did today’s matter hurt his weak and fragile heart?”

“Oh, no. That guy’s forceful log off must have been psychologically damaging for Moony.”

“Quick! Find a chick to help mend the knot in Moony’s heart!”

“Ohhhh! Speaking of the devil....”

Once more, silence descended on the rooftops. As Gu Fei was helping Sakurazaka Moony up and asking if the latter was alright, he felt the strange atmosphere pervading the air around them. When he turned his head backward, he saw a lady standing rigidly by a corner and staring at them.

The embarrassment Sakurazaka Moony was feeling evaporated on the spot and got replaced by bliss when he also spotted the lady, happily exclaiming as he darted toward her eagerly, “It’s you! Why are you here?”

“Man, that’s Moony for you. Even his recovery is S-class!” everyone discussed.

“Or you can say that that babe’s a S-class healing salve to Moony.”

“He he he... Such a timely appearance, too. Could this be fate?”

Everyone expectantly gazed from the rooftops to the street, waiting for some sort of emotional exchange to occur between the two. Instead, the lady’s gaze passed through Sakurazaka Moony and landed on Gu Fei, “Why are you here, too? What are you doing here?”

“AHHHHHH!” All the players on the rooftops almost went mad.

“What’s going on here?! Does he know every woman in Yunduan City?! JUST WHAT THE HELL IS HIS BACKGROUND?!”

“Fireball, spit it out! Who’s that guy?!” everyone demanded.

“Tsk! How can a buncha virgin boys like you understand the depth that my Drunk bro has.” Fireball looked exceptionally pleased with himself.

Naturally, the lady who was down the street now was none other than Vast Lushness. Gu Fei glanced over to her, “Mhm. I had a sort of business here. How about you?”

“He he! I told you before that this is the shortest route to the log-off point by the Archer Range. Looks like you remembered!” Sakurazaka Moony felt very delighted.

Vast Lushness did not reply and merely turned her head, “I’m leaving.” She then continued to head toward the Archer Range.

“HAIL MOONY! HAIL MOONY! HAIL MOONY!” all the Hunters on the rooftops cheered by waving their bows toward him.

“The pleasure is all mine!” Sakurazaka Moony grinned widely and tidied his equipment before quickly chasing after Vast Lushness.

During all this, Sword Demon silently moved next to Gu Fei and asked, “Are they all your friends?”

Gu Fei looked at the sleazy men on the rooftops, not saying a word.

Chapter 251 - A well-rewarded effort

Nightmare of Death held the tiniest bit of hope inside him as he forcefully logged himself off.

The game officials had emphasized about the potential loss that could result from forcefully logging off, but contrary to what was being implied, this loss was akin to a character reverting to a backup file, similar to those single-player games that would load the most recent saved file if people exited them without saving.

While this outcome sounded logical, it would naturally pose a huge loophole to the game if things were really that simple. For instance, if Nightmare of Death's equipment, level, and such would revert to how they were by forcefully logging off, would this not become a method to recover things or freely duplicate items? Just imagine if a player transferred his or her equipment to another before forcefully logging off....

Many people had naturally thought of this, yet such an incident had never occurred in Parallel World. So far, the occasional flaws that had happened were due to the use of immersion technology and the problems that came with being the first of its kind. Glitches and technical problems that happened in the usual MMOs were far and few in between.

Despite knowing this, Nightmare of Death could not help but hope otherwise. When Nightmare of Death nervously logged into the game again after much waiting....

It was indeed difficult to log into the game after forcefully going offline. Simply put, the server had too many users playing the game at any given point of time that gathering them into the designated log-off points was no longer a matter of efficiency but an issue of necessity. Therefore, while the system would automatically save the players' data upon forcefully logging off, it was just as how the game officials had put it: "Certain aspects will

not be fully taken care of.” This statement was essentially a disclaimer for any loss data that the system might fail to save or record completely due to a player’s forceful exit to the game.

Naturally, this incomplete or unsaved data referred to lost items or diminished experience points. It was impossible for a player to suddenly gain equipment or for a level 30 character to suddenly become level 40.

Nightmare of Death’s wish obviously did not come true. When he logged into the game once more, his level and equipment were still the same as before. Since the data reverting to its original state was just a small hope he had, he was only slightly disappointed when it did not happen. Actually, he felt surprised that his level did not drop. He had actually managed to benefit from his forceful log off. Given that Sword Demon, Gu Fei, and many enemy players had him surrounded previously, him dying was inevitable, and that ‘death’ would have caused him to lose two more levels!

Nightmare of Death based this assumption on the MMOs he had played in the past; forcefully logging off or getting disconnecting due to power outage would leave a character idle in-game, allowing other players to dish out attacks or deal damage on it. Unexpectedly, Parallel World’s system was efficient enough to take the character out of the game entirely upon a forceful log off. Indeed, this was a VR game that did not suffer from lagging like the other MMOs....

Nightmare of Death only felt relieved after ascertaining that his level, experience points, equipment, skill proficiency, et cetera had not lost even 1 point. When that was done, he reached into his dimensional pocket next. The color from his face instantly drained. Fishing out his coin pouch and counting its content repeatedly, he could not help but utter, “F*CK*NG HELL!” There was discrepancy in his character data, after all; the content of Nightmare of Death’s coin pouch had lost an entire digit to its original value. Kicking out in frustration, he heard the clanking of

metal as his foot got caught.

“Those b*st*rds!” Nightmare of Death furiously roared, “They F*CK*NG left a trap behind! You guys... GO TO HELL!”

This was actually a mistake. The Hunting Trap skill in Parallel World would only take effect after getting triggered, so a trap could forever remain buried under the soil if it was not triggered. Only the Hunter who had set the trap could remove it. Anyone else would need the corresponding skill to do so. A Hunter therefore had to remove the trap he had set up if it was not triggered; otherwise, he or she would not be able to set another trap. Currently, every Hunter was only able to set one trap.

That trap Nightmare of Death trod on was unintentionally left behind by a Hunter.

Before Nightmare of Death got online, White Leaf Plumage had been feeling depressed for his inability to use the Hunting Trap skill, generating much laughter from his brothers-in-arms. Everyone had each set a trap earlier and Nightmare of Death had only triggered one of them. This naturally meant that someone among them did not need to remove his. White Leaf Plumage’s friends tricked him into thinking that his trap was the one that that had been triggered back then. These Hunters loved to deceive one another, and their greatest enjoyment came from seeing one of their fellows fail to disarm his Hunting Trap and being forced to come back later in frustration to recover it. It just happened that White Leaf Plumage was among the most gullible members of Forever in Flowers. He probably would not even remember the trap if no one reminded him about it, which just made his nickname Xiaobai¹ all the more fitting.

He was just about to report this matter to a GM, thinking that he had stumbled across a bug, when Nightmare of Death happened to trigger the trap upon getting online. White Leaf Plumage felt extremely thankful once he discovered that his Hunting Trap was usable again, which was the exact opposite of what Nightmare of

Death was currently feeling about them based on his expletive-laden tirade.

Nightmare of Death discovered that Gu Fei had gone offline upon checking the 'Bounty Mission' log. At present, he no longer had any thoughts of recovering Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath and was instead thinking of ways to hide from Gu Fei. Thus, he hurriedly contacted his colleagues in the gaming workshop to help him erase his PK value. Nightmare of Death was practically naked at this point and was only at level 36; he no longer had the capacity to do missions by himself, so he could only ask his colleagues for help regarding this. In return, his coworkers tried their best to console the crestfallen Nightmare of Death. "We'll find a chance to exact vengeance on that guy for you!" As colleagues in the same gaming workshop, their level of unity and discipline was better than what was found in guilds and mercenary groups. Compared to the average players, they were also more skillful and were the sort that the term 'professional player' was applicable. Gu Fei might be an undeniably formidable existence in Parallel World, yet they were not the least bit hesitant to confront him.

However, when these gaming professionals arrived at the Bounty Assignment Hall, they discovered that Nightmare of Death still had a 'Bounty Mission', which could not be discarded. Nightmare of Death was a little out of it from his ordeal, so he had actually forgotten about this fact. Moreover, his mind was currently busy thinking of ways to resolve the matter regarding Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath.

Should he give an honest account of the matter and hope for leniency? Nightmare of Death was the sort who would only shed tears when he saw his casket². With this bit of grim determination, he decided against mentioning the matter and chose to turn himself in over to Yunduan City's prison. This day thus ended without much disturbance on the forums.

Indeed, Gu Fei only flaunted about the top-grade equipment to

his friends; going to the forums to brag about his equipment acquisition was not his style, after all. In fact, his style was the exact opposite this.

Just like how he had helped Sword Demon recover Frost Memories from Xi Xiaotian, Gu Fei asked his friends for a way to return the looted top-grade equipment back to the original owner.

All the experts present at Ray's Bar were astonished when they heard this. Returning a lost property to its real owner had always been a matter of how valuable it was. While it was easy to return ten dollars to someone, it would be the opposite if it involved a million dollars.

It was the same in a game. Those with conscience would be able to easily return average equipment that they had casually picked up, but it would be difficult if the equipment in question was something as exceedingly rare as Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath; there might even be people who would betray their friends for these items, much less if the owner of such items was someone who could not even hope to beat Gu Fei for eight generations. More importantly, this was just a matter of returning lost property to its owner. In the eyes of these experts, the items were obtained by Gu Fei through PvP, so it was clearly an effort well-rewarded! Even someone as upright as Sword Demon thought so. The entire gaming community would certainly share this sentiment when it came to such matters; Gu Fei's thought process was really too foreign and ridiculous to gamers.

"Who knows who originally owned those items? Are you planning to ask Nightmare of Death about that?" Brother Assist asked.

"That's a possible option..." Gu Fei considered.

Brother Assist was speechless for quite some time before finally saying, "And if they belong to Nightmare of Death?"

Brother Assist thought Gu Fei would struggle over this question,

yet the latter was apparently more decisive than that since he immediately replied, “I would naturally take them for myself.”

Everyone was truly speechless now. While any gamer would think Gu Fei was being pedantic, his way of handling this issue was truly the most morally upright, so these few experts with Gu Fei felt somewhat embarrassed to persuade him otherwise.

“Ask Nightmare of Death, then! Let’s see if he would tell you,” Brother Assist said in the end.

“That will be quite difficult. When I got online today, his PK value was already cleared off. If he is someone who can easily be found, the whole city will certainly be in uproar to chase after him!” Gu Fei said.

When Gu Fei had first found out Nightmare of Death’s IGN and his vile deeds, Brother Assist had posted it on the forums, causing others to say that Nightmare of Death was that one person that they would pursue for life.

This was one of the reasons Nightmare of Death and company had abruptly halted their operations in Yunduan City. In the end, no one had hunted for them. Although a city in-game was nowhere as large as a city in reality, its population was still over hundreds of thousands. Searching for one player was truly a difficult task. Having just the person’s IGN did not help the situation, either. Without a picture or a location, looking for him was as good as finding a needle in the haystack. This was how the matter had been left unsettled and how Nightmare of Death had managed to continue living his in-game life in relative peace. He was even at level 40 before his fight with Gu Fei.

“Let Brother Assist create a thread on the forums to get the equipment’s owner to contact Gu Fei personally,” Royal God Call suggested.

“A lot of ‘owners’ would surely be turning up,” Young Master Han said.

“Get them to state the equipment’s traits, then! Who else but the real owner will know of these?” Royal God Call said.

“We do. Nightmare of Death and his gang will be able to do so as well... You youngsters truly have yet to experience the world in its entirety; you’re so naïve!” Young Master Han mocked Royal God Call before continuing, “Or maybe you’re hoping Miles will do that? That way, you can have someone pretend to be the ‘owner’ of Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath?”

“That’s so shameless and despicable!” everyone exclaimed.

“That’s what he said! I never even thought of that!” Royal God Call indignantly pointed at Young Master Han.

“We know.” Gu Fei ruffled Royal God Call’s hair, “He’s the only one who could possibly think of such a method this quickly.”

“May God have mercy on this evil man, so he won’t head straight to hell upon his death,” War Without Wounds pretended to pray for Young Master Han.

“Tsk! I was just trying to tell him that finding the original owner is an extremely daunting task. It’s better to exchange the items for more liquor and enjoy yourself,” Young Master Han said disdainfully.

“I’ll just find the solution to this myself!” Gu Fei declared as he vacated his seat.

Chapter 252 - Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath's Final Location

Gu Fei's solution to the problem was to look for that person. Once he located that person, he might be able to find the owner; this was the most viable solution he could think of.

Gu Fei was of course not looking for Nightmare of Death. Given his relationship with him, Gu Fei was certain that the latter would only provide him with the exact opposite of what he needed if he were to approach him for anything. If he told him he was looking for the looted equipment's owner, Nightmare of Death would surely tell him that someone had died during the Ice Age with his whole family....

Gu Fei was looking for Xi Xiaotian.

Xi Xiaotian had previously told him about joining Nightmare of Death's organization to scam the scammers, and Gu Fei had never once contacted her for this. Looking back, Gu Fei had managed to become friends with many people in this game from all walks of life. Gu Fei recalled Sword Demon's complicated expression upon meeting those sleazebags of Forever in Flowers.

Gu Fei did not have many friends since he had spent most of his younger days practicing kung fu. He had never gone through the usual schooling process, so he had had little interaction with people outside his small social circle. It was only when he had gotten older that he started meeting people in the martial arts circle. The kung fu world was small to begin with, though; if even the martial arts family of Gu had few practitioners in them, how many more would there be in others? This inherently small circle made it difficult for him to meet new people, much less people around his age. Meeting people his age that he could interact and chat with in a friendly manner was a difficult task altogether. Even if he did meet someone his age, they would most likely only find

themselves sparring first and parting ways after.

It was as if Gu Fei had chosen kung fu to be his lifelong partner, spending his twenty-five years of life with it. Even in the school he was teaching, Gu Fei's relationship with his fellow teachers was only as colleagues. No one out there seemed to share a common language with him.

In Parallel World, he and everyone else were connected to one another by the game.

Besides, many leaders of large guilds were vying for Gu Fei's friendship to get his help in their fight for dominance in the game. Even now, they were striving hard to curry favor with him and have him join their respective guilds.

There were even those whose pursuit of women had them putting Gu Fei on a pedestal; of course, this bit was referring to the Forever in Flowers' players who saw Gu Fei as their love mentor.

There were also those who stood at the apex of their respective fields; the mercenaries of Young Master's Elite had dragged Gu Fei along with them to regard the rest of the players with contempt.

There were the Amethyst Rebirth ladies as well; this bevy of ladies enjoyed gossips so much that even Gu Fei was once the center of their chatters.

All of these connections were formed through serendipitous encounters.

Besides these people, there were those like Coward's Savior who were more than willing to talk about kung fu with Gu Fei, albeit their conversation was often one-sided with Gu Fei doing all the talking as Coward's Savior had meager knowledge of kung fu. In fact, the two's relationship was less of a discussion among equals but more of a teacher and student.

Finally, there was Xi Xiaotian. Just like him, she had a hobby that was frowned upon in reality and could only suffer the pain of

it. Still, her hobby was swindling and his was kung fu—wait a minute! How are these two things related again? Gu Fei got distracted.

After setting a time and place to meet Xi Xiaotian, Gu Fei opened his friends' list and saw that his students were starting to come online. Once the last student's IGN lit up, Ah Fa represented all his classmates to greet Gu Fei. Soon, the rest of them started vomiting all sorts of requests, such as carrying them for a quest or to grind levels, giving them money, equipment, or scrolls, and so on.

Gu Fei had seen through their intentions. These students were probably often oppressed by their teachers that they were now getting back at them by extorting as much as they could from him, who was also a teacher. He had made these students march in neat rows while calling out a cadence yesterday, yet they had hardly been deterred by that....

"Are you guys done with your homework?" Gu Fei asked them, instead.

"Teacher, it's the weekend!" the students reasoned. He did not know if they had privately discussed this beforehand to take advantage of the fact that the following two days were a weekend to viciously pester him into helping them.

Gu Fei was not exactly bothered by this, as he himself did not put much importance to those things in-game. They were his students, after all; letting them benefit from good things was no big deal. He had already given them equipment before, and he was rather broke right now... Should he bring them to grind levels? There were over twenty of them; there was hardly a grinding map in Yunduan City that could accommodate them all. As for questing... He had never carried someone for a quest before. The main issue about that stuff was traveling; he was naturally willing to represent them in a PvP, but he was clueless on how to help them with the traveling aspect. He supposed that taking the lead would be necessary if they had a poor sense of direction like Royal God Call. However, those who

wanted him to carry them for a quest probably had similar intention as those skirt-chasers of Forever in Flowers: to travel with girls around this VR world.

The students were pretty smart. Knowing that it would be impossible for Gu Fei to help twenty plus of them to grind levels together, they evenly split themselves into two groups to have him take turns in carrying them. They cared not for the experience points that they would sacrifice if Gu Fei carried them, as their goal was to simply ‘extort’ as much as they could from their teacher.

This could not be called exploitation if their target did not lose something at all, so their teacher could not hope to punish them for it by making them run laps around the school field!

Gu Fei did not mind this in the least, but he happened to have something on right now. Thus, he told the students to meet him a bit later as he made his way over to the fountain at Yunduan City’s central square. Gu Fei immediately spotted Xi Xiaotian when he got to the place.

This particular lady was always wearing strange outfit. Gu Fei knew now that she was an Archer, yet she was currently in mage robe with an archer cloak hidden beneath. Otherwise, how could it be explained why Xi Xiaotian’s cowl fit her snugly? Only a thief cloak would fit a player like a hoodie.

Gu Fei waved at her as he walked over.

“How rare of you to initiate contact with me. What’s up?” Xi Xiaotian asked upfront.

“How did that thing last time go?” Several days had passed since Xi Xiaotian got slain, but she had not contacted Gu Fei even once. The whole situation had been a misunderstanding, and Gu Fei had deliberately refrained from helping her, making him feel somewhat regretful afterward.

“Never mind that! That kind of thing happens a lot. I even got attacked by someone before coming here!” Xi Xiaotian said as she fished out a loaf of bread from her dimensional pocket. Slowly munching on it, Xi Xiaotian steadily replenished the HP she had lost from being stabbed.

Gu Fei did not plan to get involved with the disputes Xi Xiaotian had gotten herself into due to her career choice, so he just went straight to the point, “Are you still mixed in with that crowd of equipment-looters?”

“Oh, them? Their business has fallen on hard times after, so I’m barely contacting them now. Still, I exchange words with them from time to time; I heard you messed Xiaocan up quite bad yesterday!” Xi Xiaotian said.

“Nightmare of Death? He deserved it,” Gu Fei said indifferently.

“Uh-huh. So why are you looking for me? Info to continue your hunt?” Xi Xiaotian asked coldly, saying, “I’m not gonna reveal anything; he’s only trying to make a living, so what’s the point of going that far?”

“Make a living?” Gu Fei could not understand what she meant.

“This is their job. They are part of a gaming workshop, and they get paid by their superior for the equipment they loot,” Xi Xiaotian explained simply.

“Oh. That’s not an easy line of work,” Gu Fei said.

“Especially after they met you,” Xi Xiaotian chuckled.

“He’s rather unlucky; perhaps, it’s better for him to find another line of work!” Gu Fei said apathetically.

“Seems you’re looking for me for another matter...” Xi Xiaotian was quick on the uptake as she immediately realized that Gu Fei did not plan to continue serving justice on the organization.

“Yeah. Actually, Nightmare of Death dropped equipment when

he got killed yesterday. The thing is I have no idea where he looted such precious equipment,” Gu Fei began.

“So you’re looking for the owner to return the equipment?”

Gu Fei nodded his head in confirmation.

“You’re really too righteous. Looking at you sitting on your high horse makes me feel so very small,” Xi Xiaotian sounded sarcastic, yet her face remained expressionless, making it difficult to guess her real thoughts.

“The item. What is it?” Xi Xiaotian asked.

Gu Fei nonchalantly took one of the two top-grade daggers out and handed it over to her.

Xi Xiaotian glanced at it before asking, “Aren’t you afraid that I’ll run off with this dagger?”

“Nope...” Gu Fei was holding a sword in his hand.

“Killing me won’t do you any good; I’ve still got the dagger on me,” Xi Xiaotian taunted.

“Run off, then!” Gu Fei merely smiled.

Xi Xiaotian did not move and instead returned the dagger to him, “I’ve never seen this equipment before.”

“Oh?” While Gu Fei sounded skeptical, he knew that she had no reason to hide this matter from him.

“I believe only Xiaocan can tell you where he got the equipment,” Xi Xiaotian said.

“What do you mean by that?” Gu Fei asked.

“I can confidently say that I know most, if not all, of the equipment that they’ve managed to loot. And yet, I’ve never seen this green-tier equipment before. It must have intentionally been hidden by someone. According to you, Nightmare of Death has dropped it. In that case, it’s very likely that he has kept this for

himself,” Xi Xiaotian explained.

“Does that mean only he knows who dropped it?”

“Mhm. It is also possible that he has not looted it from anyone. They are an organization of professional scammers. They only target players after ascertaining that they have valuable equipment in them. In such a situation, it’s just not possible for any of them to stash away equipment without the knowledge of others,” Xi Xiaotian continued to say.

“Perhaps, it’s something they have no prior knowledge of, and it accidentally dropped when the person got killed?” Gu Fei proposed.

“The only reason someone won’t use this sort of top-grade gear is when he or she plans to sell it. Since that person wasn’t planning to use it, why would he or she leave such precious equipment in the dimensional pocket instead of putting it in the warehouse for safekeeping?” Xi Xiaotian reasoned.

“That makes sense. What do you make of it, then?”

“Maybe, he got it from fighting a Boss or a chance drop from a quest, which Xiaocan decided to greedily keep for himself. I don’t think there’s a need for me to explain his reasoning for doing such a thing!”

“Yeah, I get it.” Gu Fei nodded his head.

“That’s why I think only Xiaocan can tell you who the original owner is. Do what you will with this information!” Xi Xiaotian finished.

“Guess that means I’m the owner of it now. He he...” Gu Fei declared while looking at the dagger in his hand.

“Aren’t you lucky? Okay, I’m leaving now. See you tomorrow,” Xi Xiaotian said.

“Tomorrow?” Gu Fei asked, nonplussed.

“Tomorrow is the finals for the mercenary PvP tournament, right?”

“Oh? Are you in The Black Hand mercenary group?” Gu Fei was surprised.

“Hmph. You better be careful. I’m very despicable,” Xi Xiaotian raised her hand and made a killing gesture toward Gu Fei before turning to leave.

“Despicable, huh...” Gu Fei repeated to himself.

Chapter 253 - The Relationship between Teacher and Student

After separating with Xi Xiaotian, Gu Fei took his time doing 'Bounty Mission' while he ignored his students' pestering.

When Gu Fei got online today, he received the system notification about failing his 'Bounty Mission' for Nightmare of Death due to the latter successfully erasing his PK value. Gu Fei's consecutive completion streak had thus been broken again, making him wonder when he would attain the two-hundred-consecutive-completion achievement for 'Bounty Mission'.

The street Gu Fei took to head toward the Bounty Assignment Hall was even blocked by some people.

As more and more players joined the game every day, all sorts of trends would start among the players. These players that formed a blockade before Gu Fei today was precisely one of these trends that had taken Yunduan City by storm recently.

Everyone knew that dying with PK points on one's head was an easy way to drop equipment, so some people were now picking up 'Bounty Mission' for the purpose of looting the target's equipment with their friends. It was an evil thing to do, and this was the first time Gu Fei had faced such a situation. Although he usually did 'Bounty Mission', it had been quite some time since he had PK value on him. Now, he just happened to run into these players who were looking to entertain themselves with this despicable activity over the weekend.

A PK value of over 10 points! He was bound to drop lots of items when he died! Quite a few people happily took Gu Fei's 'Bounty Mission' and rushed to find him.

The players immediately used Appraisal on Gu Fei once they saw him. They could not get any details about his black, mage robe,

and Gu Fei's sword was inside his dimensional pocket, but his pair of boots was enough to cause these men to drool.

After checking his equipment, they eagerly shouted toward Gu Fei, "Stop right there! 'Bounty Mission'!"

They had copied this style from Gu Fei – the top expert in the business of bounty hunting.

Gu Fei felt stunned. Not knowing the real intention of these players before him, he treated them as players who were earnestly doing 'Bounty Mission'. Gu Fei did not want to make things difficult for these players who shared his passion, so he decided against fighting them and turned tail, instead.

"Quickly give chase!" The players yelled at one another as Gu Fei slowly disappeared from their sight.

"F*ck! He's too fast. His boots are really amazing!" someone sighed.

"D*mn. I told you to slay him directly; why did you have to warn him like that?" someone said, feeling discontented.

"Let's just chase after him. He can't possibly clear off his PK value so soon." With that, they continued their pursuit of Gu Fei.

Gu Fei kept doing his 'Bounty Mission', occasionally catching glimpses of some people hot on his heels. Since Gu Fei's movement speed was too fast for them, whenever these men arrived at his latest coordinates, they only ever saw the shadow of his back. To make matters worse, when they finally caught up to Gu Fei, he happened to just finish off his target. As the men rushed forward to attack him, Gu Fei smiled brightly at them before disappearing in a white flash.

"Wait... What just happened?" Scratching their heads in puzzlement, they continued to chase after Gu Fei's coordinates. Gu Fei eventually erased all his PK value. Meanwhile, the men ended up running around breathlessly without even managing to get

within thirty meters of Gu Fei.

Without his PK value, Gu Fei happily came up to them and said, “We are born of the same roots; why must there be enmity between us¹?”

What Gu Fei meant to say was that they were all players doing ‘Bounty Mission’, so there was no need for them to antagonize one another. The players, meanwhile, came to an erroneous realization, “F*ck! So you’re also in this line of work. No wonder your PK value was high.”

Since he’s a colleague in a sense, we’ll just put this matter behind us! This was what the men were thinking inside as they smiled at Gu Fei, “Let’s work together if there’s a chance.”

This was just something they had said out of courtesy. Since anything the players gained would be distributed among the party members, they would usually do this sort of activity together with their close friends; adding a stranger into the group would simply result in the pie being divided further.

Gu Fei, for his part, was thinking that ‘Bounty Mission’ was doable alone, so he could not fathom why players would need to work together for it. But since they invited him, he felt obliged to nod in response.

And so just like that, both parties reached an understanding, although the reality was far from the truth. The bunch of men could not help but think, He’s truly well-versed in this matter; immediately accepting our offer once cooperation is broached. Really, he’s someone with no underlying intention!

With that, the two parties went their separate ways. The message notification of Gu Fei had been ringing nonstop due to his students urging him to hurry.

Ignoring the incessant pinging sound was a skill he had honed after joining Amethyst Rebirth. He no longer feared receiving

many messages and merely skimmed through them before replying: “Coming.”

Over by Yunliao Farm outside Yunduan City, the students who had split into two groups were having a hard time grinding. Yunliao Farm was considered as a hellish grinding map of Yunduan City, and with the increase in the player base, it naturally continued to be such a place.

Fortunately, there was a balance in the high-and low-level players of Ultimate Class 3 Guild. With such a group composition, they were able to bully some of the grinding players in the farm and even managed to claim two grinding spots for themselves by winning duels. Dueling had become an informal way to settle disputes over grinding spots between players in Yunduan City.

However, the situation had become more troublesome at the current stage of the game. The experienced gamers that had joined Parallel World after its official release would often look for veteran players to back them up, just like how the entire Ultimate Class 3 depended on its highest level member, Ah Fa, for any fight over a territory in Yunliao Farm. Right now, the party that the students had previously bullied found a powerful backer – a level 40 player. Of course, the said player was more than capable of bullying Ah Fa in return....

There was no need to elaborate on the duel’s outcome. Just like how Ah Fa bullied level 20 players, the opponent this time around thoroughly suppressed Ah Fa with a few moves. The Ultimate Class 3’s members ran to other spots after their grinding spot had been snatched away, but the result was always the same. Ah Fa would bully lower level players, only to be bullied back when a higher level player appeared.

By the time Gu Fei arrived at the location, Ah Fa had already been stabbed half dead by a level 40 Thief. All the students were glumly sighing by the side of the field as they severely rebuked Ah Fa for being useless.

When they spotted Gu Fei, all the students felt as if they had seen the light at the end of a long tunnel. Nodding his head and waving his hand at them, Gu Fei said, “Stand in line. We’re headed off to another place.”

These students’ thought process was simpler. They felt that they should at least retaliate against their bullies and considered changing to another grinding spot as a cowardly act.

Under the threats of Gu Fei to make them run eight laps, the dissatisfied students did not dare to speak out of turn and feebly lined themselves up, disheartened.

They had originally wanted Gu Fei to come to their aid and alleviate their indignation. Who would have guessed that he would opt to cowardly avoid the quarry, instead? It was truly a cowardly act of the highest degree.

Gu Fei led the line of listless students away from the grinding map. Ah Fa, who had some understanding of MMOs, felt his eyes opening wide when he realized that their group was heading toward a higher level grinding map.

Yunxia Valley and Yunwu Basin had monsters at level 40. Gu Fei did not dare to bring them further since the students’ levels were far lower than the Amethyst Rebirth ladies’. They would practically be useless if they were to head over to a level 50 grinding map.

Although Gu Fei could easily carry them, the efficiency of grinding in such a high level area would be significantly lower. They were here to grind levels and not to have fun; he was at least thoughtful enough to consider this.

The students felt rather anxious when they arrived at the level 40 grinding map. Gu Fei brought them inside the valley and randomly chose a wide area. He then negotiated with the nearby players, dueled with them, and easily claimed a territory for his.

It was rather packed with over twenty students even if they took two grinding spots, but having more land was not the issue since Gu Fei was but one man.

With that, he arranged for the lower level students to sit by the side and watch while the higher level students lured monsters. He then tasked those with capability to help fight the monsters. After giving the students their respective roles, Gu Fei demonstrated to them the insta-killing capability that he was famous for.

The students were not the only ones impressed by his display, and even the others around them could help but glance over in shock, making the students feel somewhat proud.

The students' levels were all over the place and their experience point distribution was a total mess, but the increase they saw with this monster grind had them beside themselves with joy.

This was especially true of the lower level students; the experience points they had gained were truly abundant, allowing them to visibly see their levels increase by leaps and bounds. The students cheered. Just as the students were feeling giddy with joy, Gu Fei suddenly commanded them, "Line yourselves up!"

"Why?" the students asked, baffled.

"It's over 9 P.M. now; you guys should log off!" Gu Fei answered.

"AHHHHH!" the students exclaimed, protesting, "Sir, today is the weekend! Let's play a while longer!" Actually, a few of these students were hoping to play the game for the entire night.

"Oh... the weekend!" Gu Fei considered the matter, "In that case, you guys can play until 9:30!"

"AWWWWW!" the students moaned loudly after checking the time, "But it's already 9:27 now!"

"Yup. I've been lenient with you guys since it's the weekend. At 9:30, you guys still have some time left to head back to the city. We'll designate that as the time for you guys to enjoy yourselves.

Still, I expect you all to be offline by 10 P.M.!” Gu Fei said.

“AHHHHH!” the students howled to the heavens, but none of them dared to violate his order. Who among them would dare do so when each of them was in fear of being made to run eight laps during the P.E. class?

Ultimate Class 3 suddenly had an epiphany. As students, a teacher should be someone whom they should do their best to avoid and should try to hide their existence.

Even if they were playing the same game, a teacher would always be a teacher and a student would always be a student; their roles would never change. It was only possible for both sides to abandon their roles if they did not know one another personally, like Gu Fei and Royal God Call. Since they had a teacher-student relationship with Gu Fei in reality, this was something the game would not change.

Even if there was a teacher who would willingly ignore this sort of connection, Ultimate Class 3 knew that this would never happen with Teacher Gu Fei. He might just be a P.E. teacher, but Gu Fei was known for being more serious than the other teachers.

Physical education was a class that put no great emphasis on seniority. Grading for this sort of class was often more casual; and if anyone could not meet the academic expectation, the teacher in charge would be happy to adjust to the student.

Gu Fei was different. He was the only teacher who did everything by the book. Undoubtedly, they must have been blind for approaching him in the first place!

The problem was already here, and they had no way of running from it. Now that they thought about it, Gu Fei treated everyone rather well despite his strict limitation over their gaming time.

After they expressed their frustration on the guild channel, they pitifully asked Gu Fei, “Sir, will we be grinding here tomorrow as

well?”

“Tomorrow’s no good. I have to fight in the finals of the mercenary PvP tournament,” Gu Fei answered with a faraway look in his eyes.

Chapter 254 - The Not-so-brotherly Gu Fei

On Saturday, the finals of the mercenary PvP tournament and the guild versus guild tournament were underway. The players who were still competing in either tournament were seizing every chance they could find to further improve themselves.

Those on the verge of leveling up were doing their best to make it happen by zealously grinding for experience points. Those close to attaining the next level in their skill proficiency did what they could to achieve it as well. Still, the most straightforward method to improve one's fighting capability by leaps and bounds before the match's start was to acquire wondrous equipment.

Young Master's Elite just happened to stumble across this sort of equipment.

Lasting Sentence Dying Breath was undoubtedly an overleveled¹ weapon, and it was even green tier. Gu Fei made efforts to locate its original owner, yet he now returned to tell his fellow mercenaries that the equipment now belonged to him upon learning that Nightmare of Death was its owner.

These mercenaries did not comment on this further. Given Gu Fei's track record, none in Young Master's Elite saw him as a man of utmost integrity. Now that it had come to this... A beast dressed in finery²! A man who is saintly only on the outside! These were the thoughts running through their heads. None of the present men dared to voice them, though, as Gu Fei's sword was conveniently placed on the table before them, giving him easy access to it!

"I don't think I can use either Lasting Sentence or Dying Breath!" Gu Fei sighed as he fiddled with the two daggers. "Look!" Extending the right hand holding Lasting Sentence, he said, "The green glow isn't very obvious, so it probably means that my Dagger Aptitude is far from sufficient." Gu Fei had experience in such

things. His Moonlit Nightfalls was purple-tier equipment, and the glow for its physical attack attribute depicted on the item window was worlds apart from the glow for its magic attack attribute. At a glance, one could tell that the latter was glowing more densely. The density of a weapon's glow was the system's way of reminding every player of the insufficiency or sufficiency of his or her Aptitude.

Lasting Sentence was really incompatible with him; besides the dim glow of the words for its physical attack attribute, the dagger's additional traits were barely emitting the greenish glow, looking entirely nondescript. Gu Fei then extended his left hand holding Dying Breath, "This one is even worse. Besides its name being lit up, everything else is dimmed. Is this because I don't have the corresponding skill for dual-wielding?"

The experts looked at his two hands back and forth before cursing, "Look, your *ss! We can't even appraise them. Put the daggers down on the table!"

The Appraisal skill could not appraise top-grade equipment beyond its rank. For an item's description to be viewable, the person or owner had to hold it to his or her hand or display it using vendor mode. Everyone merely wanted Gu Fei to put the daggers on the table and show their descriptions using vendor mode, yet Gu Fei boldly tossed the daggers on the table and gestured for them to inspect the items.

The experts picked the daggers up and took turns inspecting them. They were even casually competing with one another, "Hey. Look! It's pretty green, yeah?"

"Nah. Mine's greener. See?"

"Mine's the greenest...."

Gu Fei controlled his temper from erupting. They were just complaining about not being able to appraise the items moments ago, yet they were now competing with one another on who could

make the items glow deeper.

Sword Demon was not as proactive as the others, so he got a hold of the two daggers last. Picking one up and inspecting it, he nodded his head approvingly, “It’s pretty green!” He then picked the other one up with the same hand and said, “This is pretty green, too.”

He held both at the same time. Looking at his left hand, he informed, “It’s not that green in this hand. Looks like one needs to have the Dual-wield skill.”

War Without Wounds was delighted when he heard this. Taking the two daggers in his hands, he declared, “I can make them glow green in both hands!”

“Are you done with making them glow green?!” Gu Fei almost flipped the table in his anger.

“No, not yet!” War Without Wounds shook his head, saying, “I can’t make them as green as Sword Demon, though.” Warriors had access to Weapon Mastery when they reached level 12. The weapons it covered were plentiful and included the saber, sword, axe, and spear. Bow and dagger were not included in this, though, so only Sword Demon had a bit of Dagger Aptitude.

“I don’t know if I could fully activate them, either.” Sword Demon shook his head. This was the first time these top experts had seen green-tier equipment, so none of them knew the level of luminosity to expect when they fully met the Dagger Aptitude requirement. He turned his head over to War Without Wounds, “Are you able to activate the hidden traits?”

War Without Wounds sighed glumly, “No.”

“Seems like its wielder needs to fully fulfill the Dagger Aptitude requirement,” Sword Demon deduced.

“Let’s not talk about Aptitude now! These weapons require Dual-wield skill; who else has access to that besides Berserkers?” Royal God Call asked.

Sword Demon was quiet for a moment before saying, “A Thief that chooses to be an Assassin will be able to, although he or she will require a skill scroll for it.”

“Gu Fei asked, “Can a Mage learn it?”

“That... probably not?” Everyone looked at one another for confirmation. While Gu Fei’s question sounded silly, none dared to guarantee its impossibility. Due to such an idea being silly, not one of them bothered to research about it. Hence, they did not have enough proof to refute it.

“I don’t think so, too,” Gu Fei sighed, having some idea of the design limitations and rules for every job class. He waved his hand dismissively and said, “Sword Demon can have them, then!”

Considering how well they understood Gu Fei’s personality, they had already expected for Sword Demon to benefit in all this once Gu Fei realized his inability to utilize the daggers. Some of them were green with envy. Even Royal God Call could not help but lament, “When are you gonna get a bow drop, hmm?” Royal God Call’s bow was relatively new, and he could barely keep his hands off of it mere days ago, but he was the sort of person who was afraid to lose out, so everything paled in comparison for him now with the appearance of Lasting Sentence Dying Breath.

Sword Demon wore a complicated expression on his face. He was not hypocritical and he really wanted to have Lasting Sentence Dying Breath, so he did not reject Gu Fei’s offer. Nonetheless, he felt bad to just accept them like this. “I’ll pay you for them!” seemed to be quite a difficult statement to make, however. At the end of the day, Sword Demon and Gu Fei’s relationship was not that close. They were neither well-acquainted nor unfamiliar with one another, making it difficult for Sword Demon to determine the best response to his offer.

It was unknown whether Royal God Call was being thoughtful or insolent, but he blurted out, “If you were to sell these daggers, they

should at least amount to 2000 gold coins, right?”

“2000 gold coins? Royal, that’s a really conservative estimate,” Brother Assist suddenly had the look of a fine connoisseur as he said, “One look at the daggers and you can tell that they are well beyond the current level of players, so you can’t use the market price for them. If you were to sell them separately... Lasting Sentence’s damage output is absolutely amazing, especially when you consider the current stage of the game, so its price can easily break into the thousands. Meanwhile, Dying Breath’s damage output isn’t as outstanding. Still, it can definitely be acknowledged as one of the best top-grade daggers out there. Its price can at least reach 800 gold coins. But if the two were sold as a set, with their Fatal Blow and innate skill, and given how the price of weapons with access to such skills has always been priced higher, one could at least earn 3000 gold coins for them.”

With the two’s discussion of the item price, Sword Demon took the cue and said to Gu Fei, “I’ll take it that you sold them to me for 3000 gold coins, then. I currently don’t have that sum, though, so I’ll owe you that for now.”

Gu Fei smiled. “We’re friends; no need to be so serious! You can just give me 1800 gold coins as a token of appreciation.”

“1800 gold coins as a token of appreciation... That’s quite the ‘token’ you quoted. You might as well just gift them to Sword Demon!” Royal God Call cried out. He thought that Gu Fei should have rejected Sword Demon’s offer to pay as a sign of his brotherliness and allowed a beautiful resolution to the whole matter, yet he had actually accepted such an offer as a token of appreciation.

“Kids that don’t know anything should just play in a corner!” Gu Fei shooed Royal God Call by flicking his wrist.

Sword Demon was very satisfied with this, however. “That’s a little too cheap. Let’s just round it up to 2000 gold coins, then.”

“I’ve already said 1800 gold coins, so let’s make the amount that much. No more, no less,” Gu Fei firmly said.

That was when Sword Demon realized 1800 gold coins were not an amount he had come up out of nowhere but something he had thought of. It would be ridiculous to insist over adding 200 gold coins, so Sword Demon decisively nodded his head before saying, “I presently don’t have 1800 gold coins, either, so I’ll owe the amount to you!”

“Mmm... There’s no rush,” Gu Fei replied casually.

No one present made further queries about the matter, but Royal God Call was not satisfied with such a resolution, so he reached inside his dimensional pocket and tossed a scroll onto the table, slapping the wooden surface as he stared at Gu Fei, “It’s a scroll for Lightning Mage. I’ll sell it to you for 1800 gold coins; take it or leave it!”

“I’ll take it!” Gu Fei picked the scroll off the table and said while unraveling it, “I’m without gold coins, too, so I’ll owe you that amount first!”

“Pay it upfront or—” Before Royal God Call could finish his words, he saw a flash of lightning lighted up Gu Fei’s fingertips and disappeared, followed by the scroll disintegrating into ash. Gu Fei casually dusted his hands off and that was the end of it.

Everyone present in the room knew immediately that Royal God Call’s scroll had been used by Gu Fei. Each of them was dumbfounded but also impressed by Gu Fei’s decisiveness at making a decision. Royal God Call was stunned silly. His cut-off words moments ago turned into a cracked whisper, “Did you use it already?” He shook from utter disbelief.

“Yup. I’ve used it. I’ll pay you back once I’ve got the coins,” Gu Fei replied.

“AHHHHH!” Seeing that Royal God Call was about to pounce on

him from across the table, Gu Fei hurriedly bade them goodbye, “I’ll see you guys by the teleportation array!” He then darted out of the room. Royal God Call did not give up easily and swiftly chased after him. But no matter how fast he was, he was still no match for Gu Fei’s Blink. By the time he stumbled out of Ray’s Bar, Gu Fei had already disappeared somewhere.

Royal God Call stalked back to the room, fuming. He saw Sword Demon wielding Lasting Sentence Dying Breath with barely contained eagerness, as if he was envisioning that moment when he fulfilled the Dagger Aptitude requirement for the utilization of the weapons’ full potential.

“Sword Demon, you don’t have to pay Miles for them anymore. Just treat it as me exchanging the scroll for the daggers.” Royal God Call pompously placed his arm across Sword Demon’s shoulder as he said this, yet the latter merely smiled at him, “That’s not how it works.”

“How does this work, then? Miles is not being very brotherly.” Royal God Call felt very depressed as he sat down, his expression implying that he had somewhat misjudged Gu Fei.

“He’s actually doing it for my sake... to prevent me from owing him a favor,” Sword Demon explained.

“Huh?” Royal God Call could not understand what he meant.

“It’s easy to pay back gold coins, but favors are a different story!” Sword Demon sighed.

“Everyone is dealt differently,” Brother Assist quipped, saying, “Miles treats people in a different manner depending on their personality. He knows just how to handle Sword Demon, so he did that. As for Royal... I think it’s best for you to forget owning that scroll in the first place.”

Chapter 255 - The Map's Underlying Intent

Royal God Call understood the reason behind Gu Fei's action once he heard their explanations. Since he no longer thought badly of Gu Fei's action, he cared not whether he got paid by him or not for the Electric Wall Scroll. Brother Assist's analysis was spot on; Gu Fei indeed had good grasp of their personality and treated them in different ways depending on it.

As Gu Fei sprinted away from the bar, he read the description for his newly acquired skill:

[Electric Wall

Skill effect: Construct a barrier that blocks everything using the destructive properties of lightning.

Skill duration: 20 seconds]

Blocks everything... The system's description for a skill was often exaggerated. Take the Fireball spell as an example; it was stated that the spell could burn everything! Gu Fei paid little attention to this and merely chanted, "Electric Wall! Fall!"

Lightning spells were indeed true to their nature; Descending Wheel of Flames' speed of descent could not even hold a candle to Electric Wall's. Just as the incantation went past his lips, the air in the direction he had pointed to swiftly crackled and distorted, causing the passers-by to gawk at the unexplainable phenomenon. Thunder pealed, and thin, electric current could be seen weaving a web before everyone's eyes, looking absolutely terrifying and destructive. When it came to appearance, the Lightning Affinity spells looked far more impressive than Fire Affinity's or Water Affinity's. At the moment, Electric Wall was indeed quite a dazzling sight to behold.

Although this wall of electricity spanned for three meters, it was not long enough to block off the entire street before Gu Fei. Nonetheless, many pedestrians stopped by to inspect this never-

before-seen spell.

A bold individual even stepped close to the wall of electricity and lightly touched its crackling surface. A zapping sound was heard as electricity sparked from where his finger and the wall of electricity touched. The player yelped and instinctively drew his finger back. Looking at his status, he exclaimed, “G*d*mn! Paralyzed!”

The crowd clamored in surprise for twenty seconds. When the spell disappeared, they all realized that none of them had seen the spell-caster and began to look around for the Mage. Unfortunately for them, Gu Fei had long since vacated the area.

“This spell consumes so much mana!” Gu Fei exclaimed. Electric Wall halved his mana with just that one cast. Casting this spell gave him the same feeling when casting Blink; meaning, Electric Wall was also a spell that a Mage could adjust the mana consumption of to tweak its effect. Just like Blink, this spell’s effect was dependent on how much mana he invested on it.

It appeared that Lightning Affinity did not have spells, such as Fireball and Descending Wheel of Flames, where the mana consumption could not be adjusted. This was an aspect of the skill tree that set it apart from others.

Gu Fei pondered on this uniqueness and wondered if he could incorporate it to his kung fu as he headed toward the teleportation array by the Hall of Mercenaries.

At exactly 7 P.M., all the mercenaries participating in the finals of the PvP tournament were gathered by the teleportation array. Young Master’s Elite and The Black Hand were not the only groups fighting today, as Water Flower, under Brave Surge’s leadership, was also vying for third place against Rainbow betwixt the Clouds.

In truth, the fight for third place was far more intense than the fight between Young Master’s Elite and The Black Hand. This was because the system had a special reward for the top 3 mercenary groups. Young Master’s Elite and The Black Hand would receive

this reward no matter which group won the finals; at most, their final reward would be separated by a grade. As for the loser between Water Flower and Rainbow betwixt the Clouds, it would receive nothing. Therefore, both groups were hell-bent on securing victory.

Young Master Han and company happened to meet Brave Surge and his men when they got near the teleportation array. All of them amiably exchanged words of encouragement with one another before teleporting into their respective PvP arenas.

The six men would usually discuss the members of the opposing mercenary group before a match, but The Black Hand's secretiveness made it harder for Brother Assist to do so today. Without much intel, what he shared about The Black Hand was unusually succinct.

"Mmm. The Black Hand has one hundred members, and their levels are quite high. It is foolish to consider them as weaker than Four Seas mercenary group of Traversing Four Seas Guild. After ranking first for the amount of system-assigned missions The Black Hand has completed, the group recently began engaging in some player-requested missions. From what I've gathered, the group is very professional when doing missions, quotes a reasonable price for every client, and is known for being trustworthy."

What Brother Assist said thus far could be considered as information, yet it lacked the essential information that could contribute to their upcoming fight, which was the detailed breakdown of the enemy group's job class composition, status of high-ranking members, and preferred PvP maneuver. It would have been great if they could get a good read of the personality of certain key figures as well.

While Young Master Han's strategy seemed to always be made on the spot, it was actually set in accordance to the gathered information about the enemies. Take that match with Water

Flower mercenary group as an example; seizing victory against the group of over eighty players without much suspense was entirely due to Young Master Han's familiarity with its members.

Brother Assist was undoubtedly the King of Information with his ability to postulate certain things from the scant amount of gathered information.

"From their style of executing tasks, this mercenary group's cohesion is high. It is possible for them to show explosive bouts of power, so let's be careful when dealing with them. This is the final match, so let's seriously fight this time!" Brother Assist concluded.

"How can you say this, Assist?!" Royal God Call was dissatisfied, "We've always been trying our best all this while; do you think this is a shounen manga where we shout, 'Let me show you what's true power!' after being beaten black and blue? We've already been doing all we could every match!"

"That's the spirit; keep up the good work!"

"Since the information is insufficient..." Young Master Han finally deigned to speak, "Let's collect information as we fight the match, then. Miles, Royal, Sword Demon, you three have the clear speed advantage; close in on the opponents once the match begins and find out if there's anything we can take advantage of!" As the three men nodded their heads, Young Master Han continued, "The rest of us will stay behind to conceive a strategy!"

"Don't expect anything from me; I'm just the bodyguard," War Without Wounds spat sarcastically.

"Go reset your stat points and become a full-Agility Warrior!" Royal God Call said to him sympathetically.

"Scram!"

Under the ensuing laughter and admonishment, the countdown began. It was then that Brother Assist noticed something, "Hmm. Not everyone turned up; there are only eighty-seven of them!

They're short of thirteen men!"

"Oh. That's quite normal. People have a life to live outside this game, after all," everyone reasoned. If there was an urgent matter to attend to in reality, it only made sense for a player to push the game aside for it.

The final round of the mercenary PvP tournament began. The game officials had previously announced that the map for the finals would be special. How differently did they design this map in the end? While the background and scenery looked uniquely fantastic, none of the participants in today's match was here for the view. Young Master Han swept his gaze around and took in the many prominent features of the map... The mountain before him had a breathtaking and imposing peak – a towering existence that was definitely ideal to get a view of the entire map; over by the other side was a dried up riverbed – walking along its sides would perfectly let players advance forward undetected; there were also two identical swathes of woodlands that were separated from each other by a certain distance. Just what was the point of making the map like this?

Young Master Han analyzed the terrain before pointing toward the mountain peak, "We're headed over there!"

"Vantage point again!" everyone was bored stiff. It was the same thing every time.

"No. I meant there!" Young Master Han was already advancing as he pointed ahead. They could not tell where he was pointing at specifically, but they were sure that it was in the direction of that mountain peak!

The six men proceeded forward as quickly as they could, not discovering any traces of the enemies along the way. Eventually, they reached the place Young Master Han had been pointing. At a distance of ten meters, the mountain that lay before the six men dwarfed them with its towering height. Young Master Han looked

around and pointed to a small forest near the base of the majestic mountain, “Over there!” He then proceeded toward it.

The five others followed him into the forest, still unsure of what scheme he had cooked up this time around.

“Didn’t you want the three of us to find more information?” Gu Fei asked impatiently. He had been hoping to perhaps kill off a few opponents as they gathered information, making things far more enjoyable.

“There’s no hurry. The information we need will deliver itself right on our doorstep. Just keep an eye out for it!” Young Master Han replied.

“Eye for what?”

“What anyone can draw from this map’s terrain is the importance of taking the high ground. The vantage point that this majestic mountain, which is almost as perfect as I am, provides may decide this match’s outcome. Two mercenary groups of equal combat strength will definitely go against each other’s throats for this,” Young Master Han explained.

“Do we count as a mercenary group of ‘equal combat strength’?” Brother Assist asked, nonplussed.

Young Master Han smiled, “We naturally don’t count, but we have the Grand Kiting strategy on our side! Grabbing the high ground is a must to defeat that strategy of ours, and they’ll definitely come here for that purpose.”

“To think your Grand Kiting strategy will be able to foreshadow this much...” Brother Assist sighed in awe, “Guess we’ll have to wait and see how this goes!”

“Let’s observe from this spot while keeping ourselves hidden!” Everyone had nothing to do while they waited, so Royal God Call pluck some leaves and wove himself a straw hat. Admiring his handiwork for a while and thinking that he particularly looked

dashing when he put it on, Royal God Call asked the rest, “Do you guys want one as well?”

Not one of them answered him, as they were busy with their thoughts.

Sword Demon had three daggers on him – Lasting Sentence, Dying Breath, and Frost Memories – and was thinking of how to fight using them. Young Master Han occasionally peeked from the forest while taking a sip from a liquor bottle he had fished out of his dimensional pocket. Brother Assist was the most focused of them all and stared unblinkingly beyond the forest, holding a booklet on his left hand and a quill on his right hand. No one doubted that Brother Assist’s hand could write as if it had been injected with 1000 Agility points once new information presented itself. War Without Wounds’ large frame made it difficult for him to hide within the forest, so he tried his best to squat behind a huge tree. He would occasionally look from behind the tree, appearing as if he was taking a dump... Finally, there was Gu Fei. His black, mage robe made it harder to spot him from within the dimly lit forest, his weapons were at the ready, and his eyes betrayed a glint of malice even while maintaining an expressionless face. Two words perfectly described how he looked right now: killing intent.

“Everyone’s so serious...” Royal God Call was affected by their mood. Shifting the straw hat on his head and looking with Eagle Eye, he kept his eyes firmly fixed ahead.

“They’re here!” The one who discovered their opponents was not Royal God Call with his Eagle Eye but Young Master Han. He raised his hand and pointed the enemies’ direction to them. Everyone had been looking in the wrong direction.

Outside the forest, The Black Hand’s players arrived at the base of the mountain from between the two hills.

“Are they all here?” Young Master Han asked Royal God Call.

“Let me count!” Royal God Call rubbed his eyes. Despite having

the Eagle Eye skill, the task was not exactly easy for him to accomplish.

Chapter 256 - A Road in the Blind Spot

While Eagle Eye gave Royal God Call superb eyesight, counting all the moving enemies by the base of the mountain was still somewhat difficult for him. A good sense of direction was necessary to account for all the moving players. Unfortunately, Royal God Call was geographically challenged.

Royal God Call counted the opponents a dozen of times, but even when they had made a full circuit around the mountain, he still had yet to finish the task. War Without Wounds, who had grown impatient by this point, asked, “Are you done counting?!”

Having found a perfect excuse, Royal God Call hurriedly shouted at War Without Wounds, “What was that for?! I was just about to finish my counting, but your question threw me off!”

Royal God Call’s words made Young Master Han realize his mistake for issuing that command and patted the former’s back, “It’s fine. No need to force yourself.”

The Black Hand’s moving forms all stopped by the base of the mountain. After searching for a way up, they started ascending it.

“Is there really a need for everyone to climb up that mountain?” Royal God Call asked.

“That mountain is closer to our spawn point, and we are much more flexible since we have less people in the team. If we also tried taking up that vantage point, we would already be on the mountain peak, creating the perfect situation for us to be surrounded,” Young Master Han explained.

“Oh!” Upon hearing his explanation, everyone began to closely observe the direction The Black Hand mercenary group was heading. Their opponents were climbing the mountain in an orderly manner and were showing preparedness to respond to any sudden attack from above.

“Not splitting their force! This must be the first habit our opponents have adopted during the mercenary PvP tournament,” Young Master Han laughed disdainfully.

When the men of The Black Hand mercenary group reached the halfway point of the mountain, they hurriedly reorganized their PvP formation and placed the Archers at the vanguard. These Archers then began peppering the area around them with arrows.

“What’s that for?!” Royal God Call exclaimed in shock.

Young Master Han smiled placidly, “This is the second habit that they’ve adopted; they are wary of our Insta-kill Mage. Normally, Warriors would be in the frontline when advancing forward to protect the low-Strength Mages and Archers from getting killed by a surprise attack. As you have just seen, because of our Insta-kill Mage, placing Warriors at the forefront to tank the enemies’ attacks is deemed as pointless. Instead, they have placed their Archers at the forefront to beat us in terms of range. They are probably positioned just outside a Mage’s attack range and are initiating the attacks to prevent Miles from peeking out!” As Young Master Han said that, he turned his gaze on Gu Fei.

Gu Fei remained mum for a while before finally saying, “My AOE spells may no longer be capable of insta-killing Warriors; it’s still rather effective to place them in the frontline to waste my firepower.”

“You’re a weirdo for having Twin Incineration as your strongest spell, while your other spells are weak in comparison!” Royal God Call eyed him with contempt. Other Mages would find it difficult to think that the rest of Gu Fei’s spells would not be OP as well after seeing what his basic Twin Incineration could do.

Gu Fei shrugged his shoulders, “Twin Incineration also has Physical Damage, so it’s actually more useful!”

Royal God Call almost coughed up blood. Most Mages considered Twin Incineration as the weakest in their spell arsenal; only Gu Fei

actually thought of it otherwise. As for Physical Damage... It was only due to his Moonlit Nightfalls that the spell could have Physical and Spell Damage. If not for that, how in the world would his spell have Physical Damage?

Young Master Han smiled, “That faulty thinking is actually what we are hoping for them to have.”

The nonstop hail of arrows of The Black Hand’s Archers in the vicinity allowed the mercenary group to successfully seize the mountain’s vantage point. The players who had just done their best to occupy the mountain peak could not help but feel disappointed when no enemies were found in the location. They would really be vomiting out blood if they knew that the entire process of their climb up the mountain had been witnessed and ridiculed by the six men within the nearby forest at the foot of the mountain.

Once the The Black Hand’s men secured the vantage point, they began looking all around them for the opponents.

“It’s going to be hard for them from here on,” Young Master Han said, adding, “While they can’t afford to give up the mountain’s vantage point, they also have no choice but to mobilize some men to find us. And whichever team ends up having the less manpower will become victim of our attacks. In this case, the safest and most effective method to this would be to evenly split their force.”

As Young Master Han was saying this, the men on the mountain peak began to move. Although they could not accurately tell how many men there were, the amount of moving men was clearly different from what Young Master Han had predicted. In fact, all the men seemed to be making their way down the mountain peak.

“HA HA HA HA! You’ve guessed wrongly! Everyone’s descending the mountain!” Everyone ridiculed Young Master Han for his faux-pas, yet they only heard him sigh in response. He then unhurriedly told them, “This is the third habit that they’ve formed. Despite

there being few of us, none of them actually knows of our combat capability. They're not sure if ten, twenty, thirty, or more men are enough to face us. Thus, when they split up just now, although it made perfect sense to divide their force evenly, they deemed it as a rather risky method and instead chose to give up the rook to save the king, randomly assigning two or three men to serve as lookout on the mountain peak while the rest of them concentrate on searching for us. This way, even if those men they've left behind are killed off, they will only lose a few points, giving them the chance to recover from a potential loss."

"If they have predicted the possibility of us assassinating the two or three men left behind, wouldn't they set up an ambush for us over there as well?" Royal God Call opined.

"That's a sound question, and the reason for why we are currently in this forest. So... Do the enemies seem to have set up an ambush for us up there?"

Royal God Call was instantly speechless. The enemies quickly left the mountain peak after rushing up there in an equally orderly fashion as before. None of them appeared to be doing any covert motion that could be interpreted as them having set up an ambush atop the mountain.

"Their search will most likely prioritize places like the forests and blind spots of that mountain's vantage point. Since this forest is the closest to that mountain, won't they make their way over here first?" Brother Assist asked, alarmed.

As Young Master Han nodded his head, War Without Wounds asked this with a tinge of doubt in his voice, "Are we climbing up the trees again?" While it appeared to be relatively safe when they had employed that PvP maneuver against Water Flower mercenary group in the last match, they realized afterward that that had only been due to the enemies being at their wits' end with Gu Fei constantly changing position using Blink and conducting sneak attacks using AOE spells from within the treetops.

“No; the method we used that day won’t work today. There are certain conditions for that to work, and the forest we are currently in simply do not meet those. We just can’t hide people within the tree lines here,” Young Master Han rejected.

Indeed, the forest they were presently in was rather small in size, and the trees were not dense enough to allow players to hide within them. While they could hide themselves from prying eyes at a distance, any nearby players looking up from beneath the trees would easily spot them.

“Let’s quickly vacate this place. We will promptly be spotted if they get any closer to us.” The opponents were already halfway down the mountain when Young Master Han began to lead them away from their position within the forest, “This way.”

“Won’t the people on the mountain peak spot us if we exit the forest like this?” Brother Assist was fretting as usual.

Young Master Han simply smiled at him. Everyone was already used to his stinginess at divulging his tactic, and since they knew that this particular arrangement of his would more or less be dangerous, none of them asked any further questions. Following him out of the forest, the view from the mountain top temporarily became obstructed. Young Master Han led the five along the tree lines for some time before the remnant of a half wall appeared in front of them. Young Master Han made his way behind the wall and beckoned the rest to join him.

Everyone bewilderedly followed suit. The wall perfectly blocked the view from the mountain peak, and War Without Wounds could not help but ask with incredulity, “Did you happen to draw this map or something?”

“We’ll talk about that later,” Young Master Han said instead as he led the group once more. While the wall stretched for some distance, its varying degree of disuse had the six men crouching as they advanced forward. In fact, they even had to occasionally

crawl. All in all, everyone trailed after Young Master Han while employing the appropriate stance to get them across. When the path ahead suddenly dipped, Young Master Han faced backward to say in an undertone, “Move faster!” With that, he rolled down a depression.

The others’ advance toward the land depression did not look any better. When it was Sword Demon and Gu Fei’s turn, the former activated his Stealth and sauntered his way down while the latter used his Blink and appeared in the land depression. The two smirked at the others.

The four did not bother to react to their antics. War Without Wounds once more asked Young Master Han, “Did you actually draw this map?” They knew that this was improbable, but Young Master Han’s knowledge of the wall that conveniently blocked the view of the people atop the mountain made them think otherwise.

Young Master Han languidly replied, “Keen observation.” He considered this to be a sufficient answer to War Without Wounds’ question.

“So where do we go from here?” Brother Assist’s eyes were drawn toward the road that lay before them.

“We are almost at the mountain base. We’ll just wait for most of the enemies to leave before we proceed further,” Young Master Han replied.

“Have you already observed all this?”

“It’s not observation per se, but something I’ve found,” Young Master Han had that educating expression on his face, “Upon checking the mountain’s altitude and surrounding terrain, I noticed that this road is essentially a blind spot for the mountain.”

“I see!” Brother Assist expressed his admiration for Young Master Han’s observational skills.

Young Master Han was elated with his compliment, but when he

saw that the other four were not even listening to his explanation, he could not help but feel irritated. War Without Wounds and Sword Demon were deep in their thoughts, while Gu Fei was more occupied with asking about Royal God Call's hand-woven straw hat, "You're pretty good with your hands. Where did you learn how to do this?"

"He he. This is not much!" Royal God Call felt very pleased with himself.

Young Master Han disdainfully stared at the four men and said, "We'll sneak up the mountain once the men have advanced further."

"Since this is a blind spot of that mountain, won't they come over and search this place as well?" Brother Assist asked.

"This blind spot is hardly noticeable. They are bound to miss this spot from up there." Just as Young Master Han said this, his eyes shone with anger upon seeing something, "Miles, keep yourself hidden! Stay to that side!" His plan was almost ruined by the dolt's careless action.

"Translocation! Blink!" Gu Fei chanted to change his position even as he continued to talk with Royal God Call, "How did you weave this part here?"

"Oh. It's like this... Then, you do this..." Royal God Call took the straw hat from Gu Fei and started explaining the weaving process to the latter.

Chapter 257 - Blossoming Crimson Lotus

The six men of Young Master's Elite stayed hidden in the land depression for quite some time. Just as Young Master Han had surmised, none of The Black Hand's mercenaries had come over to search their current location. Young Master Han jerked his head slightly when it was time and everyone proceeded forward.

The road truly brought the men right at the base of the mountain. This was when Young Master Han suddenly stopped.

"Well? Why did you stop moving?!" the rest hissed at him. Crawling on the ground after a while became very tiresome, so they were looking forward to reaching their destination fast.

Young Master Han pointed forward, "The blind spot ends in this stretch. We'll be lucky if the enemies atop the mountain aren't looking in this direction when we sneak over; otherwise, we risk getting discovered. Plus, the stretch is our blind spot for seeing what's happening up there."

"If that's the case..." The rest turned their gazes on the two behind them.

Young Master Han also had a smile on his face when he turned his gaze on Gu Fei and Sword Demon, "You guys are pretty strong yourselves, so we'll leave it to you two to settle things!"

"The pleasure is ours!" Gu Fei pulled out Moonlit Nightfalls and performed a sword salute. Bowing his head, his right hand firmly held the sword downward while his other open palm rested on it. He walked over to where Young Master Han was standing, chanted a spell, disappeared from his current position, and reappeared with a swish past the blind spot.

The ever stoic Sword Demon seemed to be rather excited as well. It was finally time for his Lasting Sentence Dying Breath's opening act! Unlike Gu Fei, Sword Demon was a total gamer in every sense

of the word and had all the characteristics an avid gamer would have.

After activating Stealth, Sword Demon silently passed through the blind spot. With the rest of them left behind, Young Master Han started issuing instruction on the two through the mercenary channel: “Alright. Just move according to my command!”

What followed this statement was a series of coordinates that Gu Fei and Sword Demon were very familiar with. The two followed the coordinates without hesitation and managed to make their way to the mountain, with nary a movement around them. The route Young Master Han had selected for them was truly marvelous.

“Just say it if you need help; we’ll surely come to your aid,” Royal God Call typed on the mercenary channel.

“Heh... I doubt there will be a need for your help,” Gu Fei arrogantly answered.

“Maintain a clean channel and keep your trash-talking away from here!” Young Master Han chastised.

The two continued down the route Young Master Han had given them with the final twenty to thirty meters no longer providing them any sort of cover. They were almost right under the enemies’ noses, and only a tunnel would provide them the longed-for cover.

“You’ll have to solve this yourselves!” Young Master Han said.

“Let’s just charge at them; what’s there to think about?” Gu Fei suggested. They could easily cover the distance if they sprinted. Gu Fei could even use Blink along the way to reduce the distance by five meters.

Sword Demon nodded his head in agreement. The two, who had their backs against a large boulder, exchanged looks and began counting in their minds:1... 2... 3!

The two darted from either side of the boulder. They could already make out someone’s figure on the mountain peak. The

person was fortunately talking to someone beside him, so he was not looking in their direction. This provided the two a chance to cover the distance of ten meters in an instant.

That was when the person on the mountain peak turned his head over with a bright smile on his lips. The two men beside the person showed astonishment over their sudden appearance, yet they recovered themselves quickly; one of them raised his hand to fire off an arrow before retreating.

“Archers should be acting as lookouts of The Black Hand on that mountain.” Young Master Han had already anticipated this. Since Archers had access to Eagle Eye, were capable of ranged attacks, and had fast movement speed, they could at least escape the enemies’ attacks and stall for time in the worst-case scenario.

Indeed, the man atop the mountain was an Archer. Once he spotted Gu Fei and Sword Demon, the Archer even activated Homing Projectile right away. The arrow glowed white as it flew toward Gu Fei. It seemed that the opponent really intend to insta-kill the Mage first.

Unfortunately for the Archer, his feeble shot could not even hold Gu Fei back. Casually lifting Moonlit Nightfalls before his chest, Gu Fei employed his Gu Family’s sword style, Ye Zhan Ba Fang. Not only could this technique receive an attack from the front, it could also do so from other directions. The technique allowed him to instantly attack the enemy at the most efficient angle. This arrow coming straight toward him was struck off its course by a light twist of his wrist, not even slowing his forward momentum. Rather, it was Sword Demon who had unwittingly slowed his sprint for a bit to admire Gu Fei’s sword control. Nonetheless, the arrow did nothing to stop the two’s swift advance toward the mountain peak.

Three players were on the mountain peak, and they were prepared for any upcoming skirmish. Young Master Han’s assumption about the lookouts being all Archers was a little off;

based on their equipment, the three players before them were an Archer, a Fighter, and a Mage respectively. What was odd was that these three men went as far as to cover their faces.

“Did that Archer have his face covered just then?” Gu Fei asked Sword Demon.

“I don’t know; I wasn’t focusing on his face!” The two were busy feeling elated that the Archer had his back on them just then, so all they saw was the whitish glow from the Homing Projectile skill when the enemy released it. As for his face... The more Gu Fei struggled to recall it, the more he felt that the man had a piece of cloth covering his face all along.

However, this was not the time to ask, “Why are their faces covered?” The two came here to launch a sneak attack on the three enemy players, so their priority was to end this fight as fast as they could. Only a fool would waste time asking unimportant questions at such a crucial moment.

Gu Fei and Sword Demon rushed toward the three men from left and right. The Archer and Fighter happened to be situated before the Mage, each guarding his sides. Instantly, the two moved to the left and right, as if they intended to trap Gu Fei and Sword Demon within by forming a triangle around them.

As a kung fu practitioner, Gu Fei could easily predict and discern moves beyond moves in great detail. While the two men’s action seemed to be done to surround them, the distance they created was further than necessary.

It made total sense for an Archer to distance himself from his targets to attack, yet it was difficult to understand why a Fighter would do the same.

With the Fleetfoot skill that granted him faster speed than Gu Fei, Sword Demon was able to close in on the Mage. He then unsheathed a glistening dagger, which Gu Fei could clearly tell was Lasting Sentence. It seemed that Sword Demon was very eager to

begin his weapon's opening act.

The Mage did not get flustered and merely raised his magic staff to cast a spell. The Archer and Fighter on either side stopped running, yet they did not attack either; instead, they turned to look at their Mage companion together.

Only the veteran combatant Gu Fei was able to register the minute discrepancy in their enemies' movements.

A shocking thought flashed through his mind and he promptly warned Sword Demon, "QUICKLY RETREAT!" In the same instant that he said this, he uttered the incantation for Blink and teleported himself five meters away. This was when the Mage completed his chant; a flaming spark burst forth from his magic staff, and an intense fire blossomed like a flower the moment it touched the ground.

This was the signature spell of Parallel World's number one Mage, Drifting: Blossoming Crimson Lotus. No wonder these men were covering their faces. It was so that Gu Fei would not recognize them.

The Archer and Fighter's move to dart to the side when the fighting began now made perfect sense: they were leaving the AOE of Blossoming Crimson Lotus.

Gu Fei cast Blink seconds faster than Blossoming Crimson Lotus, allowing him to escape its burning deluge a few steps back. As for Sword Demon, without an instantaneous movement skill like Blink, his immediate retreat upon Gu Fei's warning was still not faster than the unfolding petals of the crimson lotus.

Gu Fei chanted another spell once he saw Sword Demon's perilous situation. In that very moment, an electrically charged wall erected itself right before Sword Demon. Gu Fei released this spell using the kung fu method for unleashing hidden weapons. Gu Fei instantly calculated the Blossoming Crimson Lotus's movement and expanding speed and placed Electric Wall precisely

between Sword Demon and the cascading flames.

The spell description says Electric Wall can block everything, right? Show me this blocking capability right now! Gu Fei anxiously yelled inside him. This was the limit of what he could do right now.

This sudden change was something even their opponents had not expected. Most spells would be out of the Mage's control once they were cast. Blossoming Crimson Lotus was actually blocked when the flames collided into Electric Wall, creating a clear path behind it from what would have been a patch of raging flames three hundred sixty degrees of the Mage.

The skill description stated that the wall of electricity could last for twenty seconds, yet the relentless flames battering the wall only let it last for three seconds and swallowed it whole in the next instant.

Although the fire of Blossoming Crimson Lotus surged forth with renewed intensity after being blocked for three seconds and engulfed the empty space before it, it was already too late. Gu Fei's Electric Wall bought Sword Demon enough time to escape the danger zone.

Gu Fei deeply exhaled in relief as he stood beside Sword Demon. The three men looked at the two in utter disbelief; the Mage in the middle of that patch of intense fire took off the cloth covering his face. Indeed, the man was Drifting.

"They said you're a Close Combat Mage with exceptional melee capabilities; yet you've bested me from that exchange of spells just then!" Drifting spoke.

Gu Fei laughingly said, "That was close."

"But it's not over yet!" Drifting laughed as well.

"Of course!" Gu Fei abruptly turned around and sent his sword cleaving outward, causing a Thief to fade into view in an effort to

dodge his attack. Gu Fei did not power his strike with a spell, so the resulting damage was only minimal despite the cleave connecting perfectly to the target.

“Looks like it’s not just rumors that you have a counter for Stealth,” Drifting remarked.

“Turns out that the players on this mountain peak are not three but four,” Gu Fei commented in return.

Left Hand of Love and Right Hand of Cool had also taken off the pieces of cloth covering their faces. The two-versus-four fight was on the cusp of starting!

Chapter 258 - The Useless Icy Mirage Skill

There were still errors in Young Master Han's deduction. The opponents had indeed split their force unevenly, but they had not given up the rook just to save the king.

The reason behind his erroneous deduction was the lack of information about the enemies. Young Master Han naturally did not consider the possibility of the opposing mercenary group to have one of the Five Unyielding Experts. The Black Hand had specifically entrusted Drifting of guarding this mountain's vantage point to directly challenge Young Master's Elite for control. Indeed, had it not been for Gu Fei's split-second realization and coincidental acquisition of Electric Wall before today's match, he and Sword Demon might have become casualties of Drifting's Blossoming Crimson Lotus.

Sword Demon could still feel the lingering fear in him. He and Gu Fei stood back to back as the four opponents encircled them in a diamond formation.

Blossoming Crimson Lotus's fiery glow was too eye-catching and acted like a beacon to those in the distance. Be it The Black Hand or Young Master's Elite, both sides could tell that something was currently happening on the mountaintop.

The Black Hand mercenary group seemed to have an accord, as the members unanimously stopped searching the forest and rushed back to the mountaintop like moths drawn to the flame.

The other members of Young Master's Elite, which were situated by the foot of the mountain, also sprinted up the steep slope when they saw the flash of light that engulf the mountaintop.

"What was that just now?!" Brother Assist bewilderedly asked.

The fiery afterglow did not seem to be from the two known AOE spells of Mages in the current stage of the game. None of those

present had any clue on what that was either, so they could only pose this question on the mercenary channel.

“It’s Drifting!” When it came to online messaging, Sword Demon was the most practiced and managed to reply almost instantly.

“Oh!” Royal God Call perked up. “I remember Miles telling me about Drifting’s crazy, overbearing spell that comes from his magic staff.”

“What spell is this?” everyone asked.

“Tsk! Why would I deign to remember the name of such garbage spell?!” Royal God Call disdainfully said, yet he thought inside, Blossoming Crimson Lotus... The spell sounds awfully powerful....

Both parties rushed up the mountain, with Young Master’s Elite naturally being faster since they were nearer. Meanwhile, back on the mountaintop, the fight was already in full swing.

Sword Demon intended to activate Stealth with Gu Fei giving him cover, yet Drifting swiftly reacted to this by lifting his hand, preparing to send a flame wheel crushing down the moment Sword Demon disappeared from view.

Gu Fei and Sword Demon were experienced PvPers by now, so evading the spell just as the Mage Drifting raised his hand to chant was easy.

When the fire began to take form above them, the two men darted out, one going to the left while the other heading forward. Sword Demon ran toward the Archer Right Hand of Cool, while Gu Fei dashed toward Parallel World’s top Mage Drifting.

Right Hand of Cool promptly distanced himself from Sword Demon; he was no fool to let a Thief get near him like this. Sword Demon’s Fleetfoot was on cooldown after just using it. Without the skill’s speed boost, a Thief’s movement speed was slightly slower than that of an Archer. Although Sword Demon had Windchaser’s Boots, their speed was not that too far off, making it impossible for

him to promptly catch up to the Archer.

Sword Demon also saw through Right Hand of Cool's intention, so he readily changed his target and dove straight toward Drifting as well. The two would appear to be playing some sort of game to anybody watching with Sword Demon trying to catch Right Hand of Cool and choosing to target Drifting, instead when he could not catch up to Right Hand of Cool.

While Sword Demon actions seemed whimsical, the Mage Drifting's lack of protector at the moment made them sound. Gu Fei, for his part, felt that Drifting's precarious situation was an oversight likely created due to him and Sword Demon unexpectedly escaping Blossoming Crimson Lotus's AOE moments ago.

A weapon skill had two characteristics. First, it was not bound by proficiency. Unlike the player's skill tree, the power of a weapon skill was not restricted by its familiarity or constant usage to become powerful. Second, it often had long cooldown. Gu Fei and Sword Demon believed that Blossoming Crimson Lotus was not likely to explode this soon once more, so they chose to rush to Drifting.

Drifting was unfazed by this. Placing the magic staff horizontally across his chest, he chanted, "Icy Mirage! Split!"

Yet another unknown spell! Gu Fei and Sword Demon mumbled to themselves, not feeling the least bit surprised. These experts clearly had far more prosperous lives than the members of Young Master's Elite; many scrolls and several wondrous equipment were at their disposal. Gu Fei thought back to Brave Surge's Frozen Ice Trail skill. Its icy path was pretty cool-looking.

Sword Demon was more cautious this time. With the unleashing of an unknown spell, he promptly stopped his advance. Meanwhile, Gu Fei continued his forward dash with a devil-may-care attitude; he intended to slice Drifting up with his sword no

matter what appeared this time. After casting Electric Wall and Blink, his mana was only enough for Twin Incineration and either Fireball or Thunderbolt. Gu Fei might be unable to insta-kill Drifting if the latter had high magic defense, but he was confident that his sword could at least cut up the Mage to his death.

Gu Fei continued to charge forward while maintaining vigilance. He still needed to react appropriately to Drifting's spell, after all.

Snow fell around Drifting for a moment, making his figure appear somewhat illusory as he finished his incantation. The snow soon dissipated and Drifting revealed an innocuous smile. Sword Demon felt quite aggrieved when the spell did not inflict any damage upon its appearance. He even wondered just what nonsense Drifting was up to.

Gu Fei was forced to stop in his tracks when he realized that they were surrounded – to be precise, he and Sword Demon were surrounded by several Driftings. An identical Drifting stood on each of the four corners.

“Arctic Whirlwind! Spin!” The four Driftings did the same motion, sounded the same, and unleashed a similar spell, Arctic Whirlwind, that whirled toward Gu Fei from four different directions.

This sort of body duplication skill was common in various MMOs. Whether the duplicates could inflict damage was dependent on the skill design itself. Nevertheless, the real Drifting was undoubtedly among the four Driftings that that had just unleashed Arctic Whirlwind before them.

While this sort of skill would be difficult to discern in a PvP setting, Drifting was unfortunately up against Gu Fei right now.

Using his infallible ability to detect killing intent, Gu Fei promptly learned who the real Drifting was among the four. Had Drifting gathered all his duplicates together in one spot after casting the spell, Gu Fei would have been unable to pinpoint him

through killing intent alone, as the feeling would have come from the same general direction. Drifting's desire to show off the spell's oppressive might had him placing his duplicates on each corner of the target, which in turn allowed Gu Fei to determine the true Drifting.

“Translocation! Blink!” Gu Fei appeared right behind Drifting with a point of his finger, instantly striking the latter.

Drifting's Icy Mirage spell was a sustained skill; his duplicates would not disappear just because he was under attack. Still, Drifting felt very shocked that Gu Fei had been able to identify the real him in an instant.

Even if he blindly guessed who the real Drifting was, there was only a 25% chance of success. And yet, Gu Fei teleported himself right behind the real Drifting and gave him a slash with utmost confidence!

Drifting looked backward in shock when the sword struck him. Gu Fei, meanwhile, was smiling at him innocuously, “This is no good!”

The weird effect of Icy Mirage was in full display to everyone present as well. When Drifting turned to look at Gu Fei, his three duplicates did the same as well, causing Left Hand of Love, Right Hand of Cool, and another member of The Black Hand to feel creep out.

“The duplicates would copy the exact movement of the original body! Icy Mirage, huh... Gotta remember this!” Sword Demon said as he watched the whole situation unfold on the sidelines. Evidently, he considered that as a possible flaw of Icy Mirage, and a severe one at that. If anyone was conscientious enough, it was possible to identify the real caster through this.

Gu Fei cleaved Drifting for the second time at this point. His mana was depleted with his use of Blink, so he could only slash at Drifting with basic attacks.

Had this been a duel, Drifting would have been in an utterly precarious state. Thankfully, he had his companions with him. Once they saw his dire situation, each of them strove to extend a helping hand. Right Hand of Cool fired off an arrow on Homing Projectile to Gu Fei, while Left Hand of Love went to engage Sword Demon. The remaining Thief bravely bounded toward Gu Fei as well.

Gu Fei wished to quickly dispose of Drifting, so he simply ignored Homing Projectile, which had a particularly weak Attack Power and could not be used to deal main damage, and continued to assault Drifting. Right Hand of Cool's move was akin to the stratagem used to besiege Wei in an effort to rescue Zhao¹.

While Drifting remained alive even with the third slash, he could not escape Gu Fei's fierce assault, either. Any attempt of his to cast spells was efficiently interrupted by Gu Fei as well. Although the Thief ran over as fast as he could, he was not faster than Gu Fei's hail of attacks on Drifting. The man could no longer hope for salvation, yet he actually smiled at this dire moment. Following this, he uttered, "Blossoming Crimson—"

Blossoming Crimson Lotus's cooldown was apparently not as long as they had assumed!

Still, what was the point of chanting the spell if it could be interrupted?

Gu Fei's mind worked at an unparalleled speed. Instead of slashing at Drifting like usual, Gu Fei's free hand reached out at lightning fast speed to forcefully cover Drifting's mouth just as he said, "Lotus."

Drifting wore a dumbfounded expression on his face, having not expected Gu Fei to use such a method to stop his chanting.

Gu Fei's Strength might be weak against most players, but he was at an advantage when it came to his fellow Mage, Drifting. Thus, Gu Fei managed to pin him down to the ground in the next

moment.

If I loosen my grip, will his shout of ‘Unfold’ make the spell work? Gu Fei did not have enough gaming knowledge to answer this question, so he dared not risk testing this out. While he felt rather vexed by his action, Drifting was even more aggrieved by it.

“Just what in the world is going on?” a new voice could be heard asking this. Young Master’s Elite that had finally arrived on the mountain felt very perplexed at the sight of the four Driftings. What baffled them even more was the sight of Gu Fei pinning one Drifting to the ground.

Chapter 259 - A Vicious Cycle of Death

“Stop with your nonsense and give me a hand!” Young Master Han’s focus was on the rest of The Black Hand mercenary group that was heading toward this mountain’s vantage point and did not even register Drifting and the other players presently with him.

“Drifting, let’s have a deathmatch!” Royal God Call quickly issued this challenge as he rushed forward before stopping in his tracks and asking, “Wait. Which one are you?”

Being an expert gamer himself, he easily figured out what was going on and knew that the many Driftings before him were the products of a duplication spell of sort. Still, Royal God Call reckoned it would be satisfying to vent his frustration on all the four Driftings.

“Bullsh*t! You clearly know which one it is!” Gu Fei shouted, irked.

Royal God Call’s question was really silly. Anyone with half a brain would be able to tell at a glance that Gu Fei had the real Drifting pinned down upon seeing the three duplicates struggling on the ground without anyone pinning them down! It would be too undignified of the real Drifting to fake this one so thoroughly.

After adding two and two together, Royal God Call cheerfully ran over to Gu Fei. He then chortled at Drifting, “Pffft! What a pleb. To think I’d see the day you would be in this state!”

Gu Fei felt like cursing the idiotic brat! He only had meager Strength as a Mage. Currently, Gu Fei was exerting all of it to keep Drifting pinned down. If his arm slackened even a bit, it would naturally result to Drifting managing to complete his incantation!

Royal God Call was still laughing with mad glee when the enemy Thief rushed in and Right Hand of Cool fired off an arrow. Royal

God Call recovered himself enough to return fire at Right Hand of Cool after dodging the latter's arrow. He was quick-witted enough to recognize that engaging a Thief in melee was disadvantageous despite being an expert and decided to focus on contending with Right Hand of Cool at long range.

"D*mn!" Gu Fei was infuriated by Royal God Call's act of abandoning him. He had no way to deal with the Thief as his hands were still covering Drifting's mouth. Gu Fei was absolutely disgruntled for getting himself into such a quandary now that Royal God Call was no longer around to lend him a hand. If he freed Drifting's mouth, he would still be in trouble in the event that the latter completed his incantation.

Fortunately, 'some' members of Young Master's Elite were rather reliable in times of crisis like this. When Royal God Call was lured away by Right Hand of Cool, War Without Wounds bodily slammed the Thief using Charge and plunged his claymore to the enemy's waist diagonally just as Gu Fei was about to be stabbed by the Thief.

A pain-filled scream escaped the Thief's lips as he was hurtled outward with the collision. He was right beside the mountain side, so he ended up tumbling down the steep slope; his scream echoed all the way down to the base of the mountain. Those on the mountain momentarily stopped their fighting to look down the mountain.

"That's very cruel," Left Hand of Love remarked.

"Yeah!" Sword Demon nodded his head in agreement.

"It's too much!" Royal God Call quipped.

"It's not intentional," War Without Wounds feebly explained. He used Charge at that moment since he deemed it to be the most suitable method to alleviate the situation.

In the distance, the rest of The Black Hand mercenary group

heard the bloodcurdling scream of the Thief tumbling down the mountain and stopped in their tracks to talk about it.

“What was that?” someone asked with trepidation.

“Sounds like a ferocious beast.”

“Could it be a pet?”

“Parallel World has pets?”

All discussed the matter as they continued climbing up the mountain.

While the rest were viewing the Thief’s journey to the foot of the mountain, the infuriated Gu Fei remained occupied with keeping Drifting pinned down. He could only do this for fear of the latter successfully casting Blossoming Crimson Lotus.

The others listened to the Thief’s scream echo about for a bit before realizing that they were in the middle fighting with one another. Left Hand of Love was currently beside Sword Demon, so the two promptly began exchanging blows in rapid succession. Royal God Call was beside Right Hand of Cool, and both pulled away from each other before firing arrows at each other back and forth. War Without Wounds returned to Gu Fei’s side to help him get rid of Drifting, yet Royal God Call anxiously shouted, “No! Leave that guy to me!”

“Go to f*ck*ng hell! It’s crunch time!” Gu Fei could no longer hold himself back from cursing Royal God Call. He was always minding his language due to his profession as a teacher back in reality, but life happened to deal him a poor hand this time around. Gu Fei’s sudden use of foul language only highlighted his struggle at the moment, so why would War Without Wounds not lend him a hand?

Royal God Call seemed to have vowed to take down Drifting himself. When he saw War Without Wounds ignoring his cry to stay his hand, he decidedly yelled out, “Young Master!” Ignoring

Right Hand of Cool, he fired off an arrow on Snipe at the pinned Drifting.

“Wa ha ha ha! Trash! You’ve finally been defeated by my hands. You are still miles from being up to my standard!” Royal God Call was feeling very elated at an unimaginable level for having the chance to insta-kill Drifting, although the latter had already lost some HP from Gu Fei’s slashes and had been unable to put up resistance with his pinned-down position. Left Hand of Love was firing arrows at Royal God Call all this while, but Young Master Han was timely bestowing Heal on Royal God Call in response to that.

Against the combined might of six elites that included a Priest, Left Hand of Love and Right Hand of Cool were not foolish enough to fight a losing battle. Right Hand of Cool fired off a final arrow on Homing Projectile toward Royal God Call before making his way down the mountain, while Left Hand of Love tried to disengage from his fierce fight with Sword Demon but to no avail. The Thief Sword Demon possessed faster movement speed than his, after all. With the idle Brother Assist providing additional support to Sword Demon, Left Hand of Love met his demise soon after.

Right Hand of Cool’s fast movement speed brought him almost one third down the mountain in a short duration. Royal God Call wanted to give chase, but Young Master Han stopped him from doing so. “The enemies are almost here. Let’s get out of here!” The Black Hand’s players were indeed closing in on them as they spoke.

Gu Fei did not even have time to munch on an apple as he followed the rest down the mountain. Drifting sent him a message at this point, glumly saying, “I can’t believe you did that!”

“I’ve got no choice; your Magic Attack Power is just too high,” Gu Fei replied.

“The next time you do that, I’ll bite your hand off!” Drifting said.

“No, you won’t. You’re the number one Mage; there’s no way you

would do such an ungentlemanly behavior.” Gu Fei chuckled. He felt slightly bemused by this. Would Drifting have been able to sound the word ‘lotus’ while biting him just then?

Young Master’s Elite rushed down the mountain. This mountain peak assault could be considered as a success, since they managed to earn themselves 3 kill points. Drifting might be OP, but he was still just a point to the system.

The six men once more hid in the land depression after descending the mountain. Gu Fei took this chance to rest and recuperate. As Gu Fei was about to fish out a piece of fruit, he recalled that his left palm still had Drifting’s saliva from covering the latter’s mouth. Feeling disgusted, he temporarily return Moonlit Nightfalls into his dimensional pocket and used his right hand to eat the fruit, instead.

“Where to now?” Brother Assist asked.

“Nowhere. We’re going to wait here,” Young Master Han answered.

“Huh?”

“When they can’t find us on the mountain peak, they’ll have no choice but to continue their search for us on the ground. Since this is a blind spot to that vantage point, they’ll be forced to search again in the areas they’ve searched before. Leaving two or three players on the mountaintop, they will descend to the ground once more, and then—”

“Seriously? It can’t be that easy, right?” They could tell where Young Master Han was going with this. Using this blind spot by the foot of the mountain, they could trap The Black Hand in a vicious cycle of death. Young Master’s Elite would keep killing the few members The Black Hand would leave behind while the rest searched for the six of them, rendering this whole match in a loop.

“Wouldn’t that let us wipe them out after several rounds of

this?” Royal God Call asked, feeling incredulous.

“If they were NPCs, we would surely wipe them out like so,” Young Master Han stated, saying, “Since they are actual human beings, if they have the brains, they’ll surely guess our intention to attack them once more.”

“That’s true.”

“They cannot split their force evenly, and leaving three or five men atop the mountain is akin to gifting us free kill points—after all, even the number one Mage Drifting was unable to fight us off—so what sort of action do you guys think they’ll take?” Young Master Han asked. As they expectantly waited for him to tell them the answer, he said, “Stay tuned!”

“F*CK!” all felt infuriated when Young Master Han left them hanging.

Actually, Young Master Han did not intentionally keep mum about this. He just had no way of guessing what sort of desperate measure the enemies would take now that they were currently stuck between a rock and a hard place. His unfamiliarity with the opponents provided him no avenue to grasp their way of thinking. He had of course thought of several actions that they would likely take, so he could only wait and see what their decision would be before employing an appropriate countermeasure.

The Black Hand’s players panted from the effort of rushing back to this mountaintop from the distance, yet the six men were already long gone. They looked at every direction from the mountain peak and only spotted a lone figure blankly kneeling in a patch of grassland below. Upon inquiring, they learned that it was Right Hand of Cool. He ran down the mountain as they struggled to climb up.

Any average mercenary groups would lose their patience when faced with this sort of fighting style that seemed to toy with the opponents, but The Black Hand’s mercenaries were tempered

through repeated missions set by the absolutely wicked system. This was nothing when compared to the ‘abuse’ that they had suffered from the almighty system.

As expected, The Black Hand was smart enough to guess that Young Master’s Elite would attempt another sneak attack. They knew that it was necessary to leave people to serve as lookouts on the mountain, but leaving three or four men was not enough, so they instead had everyone stay behind.

“Everyone, stay. Xiaoyi, Xiaoxi, Xiaoying...” The Black Hand’s group leader casually chose several men, “You guys, choose a forest each and carefully search through it. Report back immediately if you discover anything.”

“Roger!” The members acknowledged the command, went down the mountain, and headed toward different directions.

Chapter 260 - Lure the Tiger Away from the Mountain

The Black Hand's members tasked to search for Young Master's Elite went down the mountain, while the rest of the players stayed on the mountain and animatedly discussed the matter at hand. Those who were not exactly the brightest crayons in the box sighed, "This is great! We should have done this from the start. No point in sending everyone to search for the enemies when we can just wait here for news!"

Group leader Black Index Finger eyed these foolish players rather contemptuously, "It's pointless to do that since the enemies will just either kill or avoid our lone scout."

"Then, why are we doing it now?" the members asked, nonplussed.

Black Index Finger laughed at the profundity of his decision, gazed at a certain figure climbing up the mountain, and replied, "I'll fill everyone in soon."

The person presently climbing up the mountain was the remaining player of the four-man team that had guarded this vantage point earlier, Right Hand of Cool. He immediately headed to Black Index Finger once he got back to the mountain peak.

"Come; tell us in detail what happened earlier." Black Index Finger gathered everyone to listen to Right Hand of Cool's account of what had happened moments ago and analyze it together.

"There are two points we can gather from this." Black Index Finger raised two fingers after hearing Right Hand of Cool's account, "First, our opponents can observe our movement, allowing them to attack us at the right moment." As everyone nodded in agreement, he continued, "Second, there's a path that allows them to get here without anyone seeing them."

All looked down the mountain slope, as if searching for some secret path that that had eluded them all this while.

“Did they dash in from somewhere around here?” Black Index Finger pointed to a particular side of the mountain as he asked this question to Right Hand of Cool.

Right Hand of Cool nodded his head, as that was truly where he had first discovered Gu Fei and Sword Demon.

“Where did they appear from?” Black Index Finger asked.

Right Hand of Cool pointed to a large boulder, “Two of them suddenly appeared from behind that boulder.”

Everyone was suddenly seized by anxiety, “Could they still be hiding there right now?”

“Right under our very noses?”

“That’s why people say that the most dangerous place is actually the safest!” everyone whispered this to one another.

Black Index Finger did not actually think that their enemies were bold enough to hide behind such a conspicuous location, but after hearing his men’s words, he felt that there was a slim possibility of their enemies being outrageous enough to do just that. Could they have chosen to hide in that spot precisely because of its improbability?

Thinking that it was better to be safe than sorry, Black Index Finger ordered some Archers to ready their arrows for any fleeing targets and a few Mages to cast AOE spells on that boulder. The Mages’ flame wheels struck the rock until it was entirely lit aflame, finally relieving them of the worry that their enemies were hiding behind it.

He then had some of his men investigate the surrounding flora and fauna and behind the huge boulder for any hiding players.

“This is where you saw the opponents appear from, and they

immediately began attacking you guys after.” Black Index Finger touched the boulder as he continued, “None of you discovered any sign of movement before this point?”

“Yes.” Right Hand of Cool affirmed, “I barely blinked my eyes back then when they appeared from behind that boulder out of nowhere.” Actually, Right Hand of Cool had been chatting to the person beside him when Gu Fei and Sword Demon appeared! He had definitely not been conscientious enough to keep himself from blinking back then, either. Right Hand of Cool had in fact not seen Sword Demon or Gu Fei appear from behind the boulder the way he claimed, but his account was more or less correct judging from the evidence gathered about the earlier situation.

Black Index Finger looked down the mountain with his back against the boulder, “Can this huge boulder block the line of sight of someone up here all the way down the mountain? I seriously doubt it!”

“They couldn’t possibly use that method even if it’s possible. I wasn’t exactly standing still opposite to this boulder all the time; I was often walking around,” Right Hand of Cool said.

“So for you to not have seen them at all...” Black Index Finger and several other men looked around them and saw trees and rocks that could possibly obscure the players’ line of sight from up here. “Looks like they’ve used some cover to make their way up here.”

“Getting back to the point, there was only a Mage with Blink and a Thief with Stealth the first time around – they are the only ones in Young Master’s Elite capable of using the sparse cover to climb up here without any of you noticing. When they got to this large boulder, there’s no more cover left for them ahead, so they could only dash to you guys at the fastest speed,” Black Index Finger analyzed thoroughly.

All nodded their heads in agreement.

“If they truly wish to launch a surprise attack again, they’ll

definitely repeat what they have done earlier. I believe they're not far from us right now."

When the surrounding players heard Black Index Finger's analysis, they looked all the way down the mountain side and gazed at all the things obstructing their view, imagining seeing through their six shameless and devious enemies.

"Continue searching the forests. Leave some men on this mountain peak and pay special attention to this direction. The rest of you, follow me down the mountain to begin searching for our enemies once more," Black Index Finger commanded.

"Aren't we just giving them the chance to launch a surprise attack on us again?" someone asked.

"We won't be going far this time. We'll just search around the base of the mountain. If they dare assault the men left behind on this mountain, I'd love to see how they plan to escape us this time around." Black Index Finger chuckled. After leaving several players on the mountain, Black Index Finger led the remaining seventy or so players down the path that they suspected the men of Young Master's Elite had taken.

The Black Hand's players carefully searched through all the possible hiding spots along the way. Each spot only seemed to lead them closer to the hiding place of Young Master's Elite.

Just as The Black Hand's members were no more than several meters away from Young Master Han and everyone else's hiding spot, the system suddenly announced that Young Master's Elite had obtained another kill point; The Black Hand had lost yet another man.

"Who's killed?!" Black Index Finger hurriedly checked the list of names. "It's Xiaoying; over there!" Black Index Finger quickly gathered his men to rush toward the small forest. He specifically assigned each scout to a certain area for the purpose of reacting at the fastest speed in the case that their enemies made a move

against one of his men.

“Xiaoying, how did you die?” the others asked him for further details on the mercenary channel as they ran toward his assigned location.

“I was searching the forest when I heard the sound of an arrow flying toward me. Just as I spotted the Archer, the Thief snuck up behind me and executed Backstab on me. And then, I was dead!”

“Everyone, hurry! Don’t let them get away!” Black Index Finger urged his men faster as he led them into the small forest. “Players on the mountain peak, take note of the forest we are heading toward and immediately inform us of any movement.”

“Roger,” the players on the mountain peak focused their attention on the indicated location for any unusual movement.

Soon, Black Index Finger and his men arrived just outside the forest. Just as they were about to enter the forest, the players on the mountain peak reported: “Two men of the opposing mercenary group just exited the forest.”

“Two? Just two men?” Black Index Finger asked them to confirm this information.

“That’s right. They are both running very fast. We can’t tell what their job classes are,” they affirmed. Even with the Archer’s Eagle Eye, it was still very difficult to determine the two men’s job classes in the distance.

“Are we chasing them?” someone inquired.

Black Index Finger confidently laughed, “They are trying to lure the tiger away from the mountain¹. Besides the Thief and Archer in Young Master's Elite, their Mage also has fast movement speed. It’s impossible for the other three members to escape now that we have them surrounded, which is precisely why the two players are trying to lure us away from their group’s hiding spot. He he... Unfortunately for them, I won’t fall for their trick! Let’s enter the

forest; I'm certain there are still people hiding inside."

"Wait. If they know the difficulty of escaping this forest after exposing themselves, why did they risk it just to kill Xiaoying?" someone asked, puzzled.

"This forest is too small to hide all six of them. My guess is that they've got no choice," Black Index Finger replied as he brought dozens of his men into the forest.

This forest was truly a very small cluster of trees. They effortlessly searched the place with over seventy men of theirs, yet they soon discovered that there was no one else in the forest aside from themselves. Black Index Finger's expression became extremely unsightly at the moment.

"'Luring the tiger away from the mountain' stratagem, huh?" someone mocked their group leader. This was only a game, so none here would earnestly represent the relationship dynamics between a superior and a subordinate.

"Where did those two guys run off to?" Black Index Finger had no choice but to ask this question on the mercenary channel; at least, they would know the fleeing direction of the two.

"We've kept an eye on them all this while!" someone on the mountain peak reported.

"Give us the enemies' direction, begin pursuit, and intercept them!" this command was given to the team on the mountain peak. The Black Hand's players had specially trained themselves in the pursuit and interception maneuver for the purpose of countering Young Master's Elite's Grand Kiting strategy.

"Roger that!" the players on the mountain peak answered. Just as they were about to send them the direction and order, someone else on the team blurted out, "Oh, f*ck! Someone is coming!"

Just as the person uttered these words, the entire mercenary channel underwent an upheaval. Stunned, Black Index Finger

quickly asked, “Who’s up there?”

“It’s the Mage.” These were the final words of the team on the mountain peak to Black Index Finger.

Just what sort of expert was Gu Fei? The players on the mountain peak were nowhere near Drifting’s skill. Gu Fei rushed up the mountain and instantly sent these men out of the PvP arena with Twin Incineration and Thunderbolt.

Young Master's Elite earned yet another 3 kill points.

The Black Hand’s players were rooted to the spot when they received this system notification. This happened just as they stepped out of the small forest to pursue and intercept the two men of Young Master’s Elite.

Without that team on the mountain acting as lookout, Young Master Han was no longer worried about exposing his position. Inhaling the cool breeze, he stood just outside the land depression. “Those guys have to at least know the tiger’s direction when it leaves the mountain lair!”

Gu Fei had began his journey up the mountain from the land depression once The Black Hand had rushed toward the small forest.

“Make haste,” was Young Master Han’s instruction.

“Translocation! Blink!” Gu Fei let his action speak for him, immediately teleporting himself closer to the mountaintop. Young Master Han kept Gu Fei updated with coordinates on the mercenary channel, directing him all the way to the mountain peak.

It would simply be a waste of time to depend on Stealth, Blink, and the natural cover around to reach the mountain peak. This was due to Blink’s cooldown being a whopping one minute and Stealth’s cooldown being extended to three minutes for the PvP tournaments. The entire match would probably end before they

could make their way on the mountain by just relying on those.

Blink and Stealth were skills used only as a last resort; what they truly depended on was Young Master Han's coordinates and directions. Young Master Han did not consider each cover along the path individually but as a whole. This meant that Gu Fei might occasionally be exposed as he pressed onward, but from those atop the mountain, he was practically invisible.

Furthermore, Young Master Han's previous ascent to the mountain peak let him take note of the surrounding terrain, which helped make which route to take up the mountain clearer.

Everything was unfolding according to his brilliant plan.

It was only a matter of time before The Black Hand's players spotted the hiding place of Young Master's Elite with their thorough search; hence, Young Master Han promptly sent Royal God Call and Sword Demon to the small forest using the same path that they had previously taken once he saw The Black Hand make its move.

The poor fellow Xiaoying was faithfully searching for the six men, not knowing that he had been designated as their prey. Sword Demon and Royal God Call crept into the forest and immediately spotted the enemy scout, Xiaoying. The two then made short work of the enemy with their flawless coordination.

When Black Index Finger received the system notification about Xiaoying's death, he promptly led his men over to the small forest; this action alone signified that he had fallen for Young Master Han's trap and was successfully lured away from the actual mountain. By the time The Black Hand made it to the forest outskirts, Gu Fei had already reached the mountain peak.

Sword Demon and Royal God Call of course fled from the forest after assassinating Xiaoying; they did not plan to wait for the opponents to surround and kill them. Although they would instantly expose their location to the people on the mountaintop

once they exited the forest, they knew that Gu Fei would soon be on the mountain peak's team and would slay them all. Without the lookouts on the mountain peak, The Black Hand would have no way to pursue and intercept them. In terms of speed alone, Young Master Han was not worried that Sword Demon or Royal God Call would lose.

Who would have thought that Black Index Finger would figure out quite a bit of their 'lure the tiger away from the mountain' plan and would choose not to pursue the two? However, he wasted precious time by searching through the forest. When he realized that no enemy was in the forest, Gu Fei was already upon the players on the mountain peak, killing them off before they could report to Black Index Finger Sword Demon and Royal God Call's fleeing direction.

About a third of the match's time had passed, and Young Master's Elite was in the lead with a score of 7 against 0.

Chapter 261 - Splitting Up

Just like in reality, the weather in Parallel World would change from time to time, and the map for this PvP tournament was no different. At the highest point of the map, Gu Fei, who was in a good mood, suddenly felt a gust of wind blow past him. Beside a land depression by the foot of the mountain, Young Master Han was also feeling good enough to tease Gu Fei, “You look really silly standing up there in this breeze we’re having.”

In contrast, the members of The Black Hand mercenary group were feeling rather frustrated, and no amount of wind could blow their exasperation away.

Black Index Finger would really be a lost cause if he still did not realize at this stage of the match that he had been had by Young Master's Elite. It was fine that he had fallen for their trick, but Black Index Finger still had a hard time swallowing this outcome, as he had been very confident just moments ago. Even Black Index Finger's comrades felt embarrassed for him and were unsure of what to say to comfort him.

Thankfully, the camaraderie between the members of The Black Hand was high; although they mocked their leader inside, they knew very well who had really caused their embarrassment. Each of them showed strong desire to tear Young Master's Elite to pieces, causing the entire The Black Hand to experience a surge in morale.

“Boss Black, tell us what we should do now!”

There were more ‘bosses’ in Parallel World than there were top-grade equipment. If anyone shouted “Boss!” on the street, seven or eight players would turn in response. Some of the more muddle-headed ‘bosses’ would even mistakenly treat the player who had yelled as a sort of underling. Thus, to avoid such mistakes, many would give their boss a different nickname. Not only would it

sound more personal, it would also be easier to distinguish their boss from others.

Black Index Finger directed his gaze on the distant mountain peak and said, “This mercenary group sure isn’t run-of-the-mill. It’s really no coincidence for them to kill their way through finals.” Black Index Finger of course did not give this praise for no reason. Since he suffered a substantial loss by falling for the enemies’ ruse, he knew that commending his opponents would make him seem open-minded while offering an excuse for his folly. The opponent was strong, so it was normal to suffer a loss! As a boss, it was necessary for him to look at the bigger picture.

“Now that the six enemies have gotten ahead of us terms of kill points, they would probably begin employing the Grand Kiting strategy!” someone said fretfully. The fear for this strategy had already been widespread among them.

“It’s actually advantageous for us if they do resort to using the Grand Kiting strategy; that way, our pursuit and interception lessons won’t go to waste,” Black Index Finger said, adding, “What we should be more afraid of is if they choose to hide. This d*mnable map may look simple, but it’s actually full of hiding spots that we’re still not aware of. To think we have only noticed this fact now.”

Black Index Finger’s words unintentionally touched on the fact that Young Master Han’s strategies were born off detailed information and the latter having spent significant time and effort to gain a good understanding of every map’s peculiarities ever since the start of the entire mercenary PvP tournament.

Including his time participating in the guild versus guild tournament, Young Master Han had practically perused over a dozen maps to date. Since Black Index Finger only noticed these things now, researching about the map himself would only breed greater anxiety. This essentially meant that thinking about this any further was useless.

Hence, Black Index Finger did not bother deploying his men all over the map to research its terrain. Instead, he continued to gaze on the faraway mountain peak as he analyzed the situation from where he stood, “We have six opponents, only six! There’s no way they could fight us head on; that must be why they’re fighting us in such a roundabout way! Based on our intel, the three members of Young Master’s Elite—a Warrior, a Knight, and a Priest—should have slow movement speed.”

“Just like moments ago, the Thief and Archer lured us into this small forest, while the Mage killed our lookout team on the mountain peak. As for the three others, where were they during all that?”

Everyone gawked as their boss lost himself in his thoughts. They had already agreed three days ago that the key to clinching victory in this match was to locate their enemies, so what was the point of him repeating it right now?

“The other three men also hiked that mountain. Since they were able to descend from it without trouble despite their slow movement speed, they should not be far from the mountain. We have always had people up the mountain since then, yet we never saw one of them. But somehow... The Thief and Archer were able to make it into the forest...” Black Index Finger was mumbling this to himself when he had an epiphany. Calling the attention of everyone around him, he said, “Search the forest for anything that could provide cover! Why are we afraid to split into smaller teams? That’s entirely due to that Insta-kill Mage’s ranged capabilities and our cluelessness on their fighting prowess as a team. Now that they have split up like this, what’s there for us to be afraid of? Let’s form ten-man teams now,” Black Index Finger ordered. He sounded as if he had uncovered something huge.

“Boss Black!” Monologue under the Moon interjected, “That Mage doesn’t simply just cast spells. With his prowess, I doubt a ten-man team is enough to subdue him!”

“Alright!” Black Index Finger felt he should consider Monologue under the Moon’s suggest as the latter had personally exchanged blows with Gu Fei before, “Let’s make a 20-man team just for him. There shouldn’t be any more issues going up against him, yeah?”

“That... It should be fine!” Monologue under the Moon did not dare to affirm this so easily. He had gathered the same amount of players that day to intercept Gu Fei, yet he had still been unsuccessful in the end.

“Take the lead for these twenty men, and try to take care of him up on that mountain,” Black Index Finger said.

“Got it!” Monologue under the Moon would really lose face if he still showed fear at the prospect of facing a lone enemy together with these twenty men. Gu Fei was currently occupying the mountain’s vantage point, and the team coming for him did not know of any route to take him by surprise. It was highly like for their target to flee at the sight of twenty men charging up the mountain. This task of taking the enemy down was not easy, after all.

“You three!” Monologue under the Moon selected three men from his team, “Circle to the back of the mountain and draw his attention. We’ll aid you as soon as we can.” This was the only plan he could come up with.

The three men exited the forest and ran straight to the back of the mountain. From his analysis, Gu Fei should be able to spot the three men from atop the mountain and would chase after them. Naturally, he would have no way of noticing the activity on this other side. After all, the mountain peak was not shaped like a pyramid, which would provide anyone an unrestricted three-hundred-sixty-degree view of the surroundings. Why else would The Black Hand assign three or four men up there?

At this point, the men who were tasked to search the forest discovered quite a few things. The trench and the wall Young

Master's Elite had used were uncovered after Black Index Finger filtered out all the possible options.

“They must have used this cover to make their way into the forest. Send a team to travel through this trench. Let’s see if we’ll discover something. Who knows? Maybe we can even locate the three men’s hiding place. Conceal yourselves well. He he. The opponents surely don’t expect us to locate this path that they’ve used to escape our lookout on the mountain peak. They have pretty much gifted us a yellow brick road to their location!” Black Index Finger was quite pleased with himself.

Splitting the eighty men into squads of eight, two squads followed Monologue under the Moon to confront Gu Fei, three squads traveled through the yellow brick road, and the remaining three squads were formed into two teams by Black Index Finger. “You guys, head down this direction. That’s where the Thief and Archer have run off to. Try your best to extend your search radius. Once Monologue under the Moon take back the mountain peak, his team is sure to provide you better direction.”

The two teams proceeded to do his bidding. Only a few players were left with Black Index Finger now. Actually, there were not exactly eighty men just then. Several members of The Black Hand were previously sent to search the nearby forests, and even with Xiaoying’s death, the others had yet to return. Black Index Finger swept his gaze around him before deciding to leave one man in the forest, “Looks like they favor this little forest. Hide yourself somewhere inside it and inform us if you see any traces of them. But do not, under any circumstances, reveal yourself to them, okay?”

After assigning this task, he suddenly thought that waiting for their targets to show themselves was not a bad idea and promptly sent out an instruction to the others who were searching the forests in the map: “Wait in the forest you’re in. Hide yourself well and report back if something happens.”

With all possible arrangements made, the remaining three men and Black Index Finger found that they were free of any task and decided to join Monologue under the Moon's team that was heading for the mountain.

The three men Monologue under the Moon had sent ahead completed their journey to the back of the mountain, yet they were unsure if the enemy Mage was chasing after them. In any case, Monologue under the Moon and his team were already on their way to the mountain peak. Killing off the OP Mage should not be an issue with these twenty men.

That gentle draft was still blowing inside the PvP arena. The Black Hand's players were each attending to their tasks as they furtively moved about.

Out of the two teams that were sent to crawl through the trench, one reached the end of the path and realized that it was a dead end and the other ended up in an even larger ditch. Stuck at a T-intersection, the second team did not know whether to head left or right. The team hesitated for a while, tossed a few coins, and finally decided to head right. They kept walking and walking until they saw the mountain appear further and further away from their position until it became entirely obscured. From what their group leader Black Index Finger told them, the enemies should be near the foot of the mountain, so this clearly meant that they were currently going on the wrong route. Their team leader thought to himself, Shoot! What a lousy coin toss! "Alright everyone, turn back and head left!" he then told his teammates aloud.

The third team experienced what Young Master's Elite had gone through; arching their backs and wading through behind the dilapidated wall, they occasionally tumbled and crawled until they reached the end and found the land depression. This bunch was a lot smarter than the two teams and did not flip a coin to decide the heading direction; instead, they headed in the direction that would bring them closest to the mountain peak.

However, the fastest team was still the one under Monologue under the Moon's command. The three men he had sent to circle the mountain slowed their pace and pretended to climb. As for the other seventeen men, they began charging toward the mountain using their fastest speed.

The higher the mountain was, the greater the wind blowing was; even Parallel World was no exception. When Monologue under the Moon reached the mountain peak, he promptly spotted a lone figure standing there. Gu Fei, who was standing stoically on the mountain peak, gave off this heroic vibe with his long, mage robe fluttering with the wind. On his hand was Moonlit Nightfalls. He was drawing circles on the ground out of boredom, so when he heard the arrival of people, Gu Fei excitedly looked up. Seeing Monologue under the Moon, he smiled, "It's you. What took you guys so long?!"

Gu Fei was about to descend the mountain after being teased by Young Master Han for standing up the mountain purposelessly. Young Master Han had not mentioned to Gu Fei his need for a pair of eyes up on the mountain but had instead solemnly asked him: "Miles, how many men do you think you can handle all at once?"

"Ten should not be a problem," Gu Fei confidently replied.

"Is that your limit?" Young Master Han pressed on.

"'Limit' is such a vague concept; who knows..." Gu Fei found his question difficult to answer.

"I guess it's better for you to stay up there, then."

"Why's that?"

"To test your limits," Young Master Han replied.

Chapter 262 - Have a Taste of their Medicine

Thinking that his ruse was successful, Monologue under the Moon felt elated to see Gu Fei on this mountain peak. He was the first one to rush up the mountain, and his teammates climbed up following him. Monologue under the Moon kept his eyes glued to Gu Fei, hoping to savor the change in the latter's expression. He and his men would feel more confident if Gu Fei's face revealed a hint of fear or surprise.

Unfortunately for them, Gu Fei only had that placid smile on his lips. Counting the players before him, he could not help but say to Monologue under the Moon, "Seventeen? Why didn't you bring an even number of men?"

Didn't he see the three men on the other side of the mountain? Monologue under the Moon stood rooted to the spot until the three men finally made it to the peak as well. Gu Fei nodded his head when he saw the newest arrivals, "Twenty. So you did bring an even number of men."

Monologue under the Moon could not fathom Gu Fei's thoughts, but now that all his twenty teammates were present, he no longer felt scared of this one Mage. With a wave of his arm, the twenty men spread evenly and surrounded Gu Fei. Everyone was pumped up; after getting tricked by their opponents time and time again, they finally got the chance to vent their frustrations.

"Twenty men... Is that the limit you've set for me to challenge?" Gu Fei sent this message over to Young Master Han.

"Do whatever you can! Don't go crying for help if you can't deal with them; no one is going to come and save you," Young Master Han replied apathetically.

Gu Fei collected himself and asked the person before him, "Are there more?"

“What do you mean ‘more’?” Monologue under the Moon asked back, puzzled.

“Are there more people coming?” Gu Fei clarified.

Monologue under the Moon was too shocked to respond, which Gu Fei took in as a silent agreement.

“Alright. Facing twenty men is quite difficult. Don’t blame me for not showing mercy!” Gu Fei told the people present.

What sort of joke is this?! Monologue under the Moon felt confused when his heart trembled. He clearly had the advantage in this fight with his twenty men, yet fear still gripped his heart. “ATTACK!” Monologue under the Moon attempted to clear the unsettling feeling inside him by starting the fight.

“Descending Wheel of Flames! Descend!”

“Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno! Arise!”

The Mages in the twenty-man team cast their favorite AOE spells to begin the assault. It was impossible to dodge AOE spells in this kind of encirclement which did not give much room for mobility. If Gu Fei wanted to evade all the spells, he would have to break through the enemies’ encirclement. However, Monologue under the Moon and company would never be kind enough to let him do so. The spells were almost upon Gu Fei by now. Back when he had been fighting Carouse, this was precisely how he had died without being able to put up a fight.

The saying that ‘The present cannot be compared to the past’ had never been truer, though. Now that Gu Fei had the Blink skill, tactics employing encirclement were no longer a problem for him. As flames were about to break out from above and beneath him, Gu Fei raised his arm, uttered an incantation, and teleported himself behind an enemy.

This was quite similar to the traditional children’s game of [‘handkerchief toss’](#). Twenty men formed a circle, with Gu Fei

tossing the handkerchief, and everyone wondering who was he actually behind. There were naturally crafty children who would toss the handkerchief without the others knowing, pretending to carry on searching for a target until they completed a full circle. All the while, the target would be foolishly sitting without knowing that he had actually been targeted!

Gu Fei did not bother with this sort of machination and simply depended on his speed. The moment he disappeared from everyone's sight, he already appeared behind an enemy without giving anyone a chance to react. Gu Fei wasted no time. Shoving the man toward the encirclement, he sent a sword slash for good measure.

Like pushing a man into a burning furnace, Gu Fei specifically chose someone who seemed to have low HP. He added in a slash for fear that the combined Mages' Spell Damage would not be enough to insta-kill the man.

The man instantly morphed into a beam of white light in that blazing fire. All the enemies' hearts chilled at their teammate's death, but they quickly recovered themselves and continued attacking Gu Fei.

Monologue under the Moon also did not get flustered for he was mentally counting, That's one spell down.

According to their intel, Gu Fei's mana was only enough for him to cast about four spells. Monologue under the Moon truly believed that depleting Gu Fei's mana was the key to dealing with him. While it seemed cruel to sacrifice his teammates for an enemy Mage's mana, this was hardly an issue in the mercenary PvP tournament, as the penalty for dying was currently not being enforced. No one would actually mind sacrificing a little bit of experience points and similar rewards at the end of the match if it meant winning the overall PvP in the grand scheme of things.

Gu Fei extended his sword and swiftly deflected an arrow on

Homing Projectile that an Archer had released when Gu Fei was still inside the encirclement and had managed to home in on him despite his Blink. He then took several steps backward to distance himself from the other players.

Everyone thought that Gu Fei was trying to escape when he began retreating. One of the Thieves was even seized with anxiety at the thought of being unable to catch up to Gu Fei once he fled, possibly born of hearing that Gu Fei had very fast movement speed, so he activated his Fleetfoot to chase after him.

Perfect timing! Gu Fei thought to himself. Seeing the Thief rush toward him, Gu Fei took a step forward, turned his body to the side, and extended his leg out. His hand found its way to the man's back and gave the latter a push.

"Ah!" The Thief staggered after being tripped up by Gu Fei, but this Thief's inherent nimbleness did not cause him to fall down. The Thief's staggering brought him in the direction of the slope ahead and he soon found himself tumbling down the mountain edge.

His scream reverberated everywhere, causing Young Master Han to send Gu Fei a message: "What in the world is going on up there?!"

"I just pushed someone down the mountain," was Gu Fei's calm reply. The remaining eighteen men stood rooted to the spot as they listened to their teammate's terrible scream on his tumble down the mountain.

"Kill them off properly! Can they even die from being pushed down the mountain?" Young Master Han was unhappy. Although he told Gu Fei to challenge his limits, his real intention was to have Gu Fei completely annihilate the twenty men.

"Seems like he's dead," Gu Fei replied.

The system suddenly announced another kill point for Young

Master's Elite. The man who had rolled down the mountain promptly died from that one push. Considering the many bumps and beatings the Thief had to suffer before he died, it seemed Gu Fei was not lying when he said he would be merciless on dealing with the enemies.

“Keep pushing them off the mountain, then!” Young Master Han did not care how the men died as long as they were killed off, as they were also busy on their end.

The ten-man squad that had taken the dilapidated-wall route finally managed to locate the three members of Young Master's Elite at the end of their journey. They were elated and awed by their boss's accurate judgment of the situation. “You're all surrounded!” Some of the men seemed to have watched too many Hong Kong films. Shouting at the three enemies, they pulled their bowstrings toward them.

“The f*ck are you shouting for?! Just attack!” another man ridiculed.

The Black Hand's ten members were treating this encounter very offhandedly, as if the three men before them were not worth their time. Their claim to have the three surrounded was mere lip service and not something they had actually done. What was there to surround, anyway? Given that the three men did not have fast movement speed, they could easily catch up to them if they attempted to escape.

A Warrior, a Priest, and a Knight... It might take time to dispose of them, but that was it. Only the Warrior had combat strength in this team, and that bit of strength was not enough to defeat their ten-man group. The ten men happily reported their success in locating the targets on the mercenary channel, boasting that they would quickly take the enemies down.

The ten men brandished their weapons, fired arrows, cast spells,

and so on. The arrows were the first to reach the three men; War Without Wounds stepped forward to meet the arrows head on as Young Master Han steadily bestowed Heal on him. Brother Assist also granted War Without Wounds Blessing of Resilience to increase his physical defense.

“Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno—” A Mage tried to chant a spell to burn the three men down, but an arrow flew out of nowhere and struck him on his temple. “Arise!” Although he managed to spit the last word and fire blanketed the area, the Mage was nevertheless killed off by that arrow on Snipe. As always, Royal God Call picked off the weakest among the opposing group.

The Mage’s spell dealt no damage to anybody since he had been killed off, while Royal God Call’s one arrow unnerved the remaining nine men. This was when a figure leaped from the land depression amid a cloud of dust and deeply plunged the dagger in his hand into another enemy. War Without Wounds also took this chance to employ his well-practiced sequence of attacks that had him activating Charge before canceling it into Cyclone; he dove within the opponents’ ranks and whirled about with his claymores. Royal God Call continued sending arrows toward the enemy men in the distance.

Young Master Han leisurely bestowed Heal in one corner when necessary, while Brother Assist drew near the enemies to aid Sword Demon. War Without Wounds was still spinning about, so even his teammates could not get to him.

Black Index Finger miscalculated when he thought that Young Master's Elite had split up into one man, a pair, and a trio to accomplish their tasks and did not consider the possibility of Sword Demon and Royal God Call regrouping with the others once they exited the forest. After Gu Fei eliminated The Black Hand’s lookout team on the mountain peak, the two were naturally free to roam the map.

Those of The Black Hand who had originally thought that they

could easily eliminate the three men of Young Master's Elite were now experiencing the opposite with the addition of the other two. With the group's top-grade equipment, exceptional skills, and seamless coordination, Young Master's Elite was instead the one to decimate the enemies in no time at all.

The team leader grinded his teeth at the sight of his men being killed off one by one. Although he already called for help on the mercenary channel, it would still take some time for the others to reach them since they had gone to different directions. They had once more been tricked, and they had completely fallen for Young Master's Elite's ruse this time! Boss Black! You wanted to take advantage of the enemies' separation from one another to conquer them, but it is actually us who ended up tasting our medicine, was the team leader's bitter thought before he died. He felt very disappointed of Black Index Finger for making yet another fatal mistake.

"Done!" War Without Wounds dusted his hands off after putting the claymores inside his dimensional pocket.

"Miles, how are things on your end?" Young Master Han sent Gu Fei this message, but he got no reply. He was evidently in the middle of an intense fight, so he neither had the time nor ability to reply to him.

It would be perfect if Miles could dispose of all those men on the mountain peak! Young Master Han thought to himself, but he knew not to expect anything. It was already a blessing that Gu Fei could fend off twenty men at once, so expecting him to kill all of those men in such a short time was pushing it. Since the opposing group has people on the mountain right now, it's going to be inconvenient to separate... The problem is that the others will soon arrive here... As Young Master Han was pondering on this, Royal God Call rushed toward them after firing his fill of arrows and yelled, "There are still some enemies over there; let's go take them down!"

“Where?” They climbed out of the land depression and looked in the direction that Royal God Call had indicated. Four men were standing with uncertainty at the base of the mountain.

“Looks like that’s the mercenary leader; what a haul!” Young Master Han mused.

Black Index Finger and his three men, who had reached the foot of the mountain earlier, were planning to catch up to Monologue under the Moon’s team and see for themselves just how formidable the legendary Mage was when they received another team’s message about discovering the three men of Young Master’s Elite; this team then confidently promised to quickly eliminate the three enemies.

But before Black Index Finger could send words of encouragement over, the ten-man team began crying for help. Although Black Index Finger and his men made it halfway up the mountain, they did not know how the team had fared since they could not see the ten men’s location from their position. As such, they decided to head toward the team’s reported coordinates, yet they only saw their opponents’ kill points rising fast and their headcount correspondingly dropping as they ran over.

By the time Black Index Finger and company made it to the base of the mountain, the ten-man team had already been decimated.

The players who had died promptly reported to them that there were not three men present in the location but five. Each of them was super strong, so the ten men were simply not enough to deal with them!

Black Index Finger thus instructed the three with him to stop. While Black Index Finger considered himself as an expert, he did not think of himself as a peak expert. He had known from his research of Young Master’s Elite that its members were made up of the famous gamers Sword Demon, War Without Wounds, Royal God Call, and Brother Assist! Young Master’s Elite... They were

truly elites in name and form.

There were a total of five formidable opponents, and there were only four of them. I may be an expert, but the three with me are just above average! Black Index Finger shamelessly thought to himself. The self-confidence he had meant nothing at this stage, so Black Index Finger could only tell the others to stop and to rendezvous with the other teams fast, instead.

He might not have chosen to advance, but the five men of Young Master's Elite had taken the initiative to do so, instead.

The five men climbed out of the land depression and strode over to the four men with murder in their minds.

A traditional Chinese game similar to 'duck, duck, goose', except that the picker will place a piece of cloth or handkerchief behind someone, and no one is allowed to look behind.

The job of the picker is to find a target, drop a piece of cloth, and make a full circle around. The target in return will have to pick up the cloth and return it to the original owner before he/she completes his/her trip around them.

Chapter 263 - Pursuers behind... Rolling men ahead...

The land depression was not far from the foot of the mountain. When Black Index Finger saw Royal God Call running toward it, he could not help but feel anxious, Are they planning to flee again? Should I check where they are running off to?

In the end, he had worried for nothing. The enemies were not planning to flee; instead, they climbed out of the land depression and personally received his team since they were unwilling to go to them.

Black Index Finger froze on the spot, as he could already predict the outcome of this possible four-versus-five fight. Seeing the opponents take the initiative to fight them, he immediately made a decision, “Let’s head to the mountain peak first!”

Monologue under the Moon’s team on the mountain was a lot closer compared to the reinforcements heading over, so it was better for Black Index Finger’s group to join with the closer team, as they would have a higher probability of achieving victory or stand a better chance stalling for time until the reinforcements arrived that way. With this thought in mind, Black Index Finger urged the other three men to climb up the mountain faster.

It should actually be him that the others needed to hurry. After all, the one with the slowest movement speed among the four was the Warrior Black Index Finger. It would in fact be safer for the three men to split up and hike on their own. While none of them knew just how much slower they were currently moving with the addition of the cumbersome Black Index Finger, their speed was certainly slower compared to if there were just the three of them. They had seen all the system notifications, so they naturally knew just how powerful their opponents were. Since Black Index Finger was their group leader, the three could only grumble about his

slow running speed internally and fantasize about getting rid of the latter by kicking him down the mountain. And yet, Black Index Finger had the audacity to tell them to hurry as if they were the ones at fault for their slow progress!

“Stop right there! Don’t run away!” Royal God Call had fast movement speed and could shoot from afar, so when the four men entered his attack range, he promptly fired off an arrow on Snipe.

The four men became Royal God Call’s moving targets and his arrows continued to pursue them as they hurriedly clambered up the mountain. There was no Priest among the four men, so they could only endure the pain and lament the hardship that they were suffering right now. This was especially true of the man who had been hit by Royal God Call’s Snipe; despite him not getting insta-killed, it was still a miracle that the man did not faint from how low his HP had dipped.

“His Attack Power is too high!” The man was thoroughly unnerved by this and he decisively abandoned all forms of loyalty by increasing his running speed, effectively leaving the others in the dust.

Black Index Finger was constantly telling the three men to hurry, so he knew it would be inappropriate for him to comment on one of his teammates’ act of speeding up. Helpless, he could only look at the remaining two men with him.

The two were at least loyal enough to not leave Black Index Finger to his own devices, and the three continued to climb together under the enemy Archer’s trickle of arrows. Royal God Call’s Snipe was fortunately on cooldown, so the damage he could deal was not very high. Despite it being higher than the average Archer’s damage output, it was still within the tolerable level. Royal God Call was just one Archer, and his bow was not an automatic rifle. It was perfectly normal for some of his shots to miss, considering how he was running as he shot arrows at the moving targets. Even the Olympics did not have such a difficult

event like this.

Royal God Call was always not too far off the mark, though, and the three men would break out in cold sweat whenever his arrows landed near them. Death was certain if any of them took his shots consecutively, since none of them had full HP right now.

Black Index Finger was already moving at his fastest speed, but it was still difficult for the two men to distance themselves from their pursuers while matching his inherently slow pace. Oh, how they wished to do the same as their other comrade....

With that, the four men continued to climb with one ahead and the other three trailing behind for quite some time. Suddenly, they heard cries coming from the mountain peak. They lifted their heads just in time to see three men with flailing arms desperately trying to regain their balance right by the mountain edge. Anyone looking could tell that it was too late, though, as the players tumbled down soon after.

This situation took the four men by surprise. Arrows were still flying from behind them, and now rolling logs—no wait—rolling men were blocking their advance. Was this how a high-ground assault was done in ancient times?

The man climbing ahead identified the tumbling men to be their brothers-in-arms and he moved to intervene in the first man's downward roll. However, he might have been too confident in his assumption that he could stop the man from rolling down the slope. Did he even consider how much Strength he had, or the accumulated force behind the downward roll of the man? Were his slender arms enough to counter the force created by the man's downward roll?

Surprisingly, he managed to do just that! But if there was one thing that physics taught people, it was that either of these two outcomes could be achieved from such a thoughtless action: one was for the object to come to a complete stop and another was for

it to continue in a uniform motion.

The two unfortunately had the second outcome, which had them rolling down the mountain once more. The player who had attempted to stop his comrade's downward roll became a rolling man as well. Soon after, the two gained speed and tumbled down faster than ever.

Black Index Finger and the two others, who were just slightly below the men, were originally planning to stop their downward roll, but none of them dared to do it after witnessing their brother-in-arms' disastrous attempt. Instead, they acted clueless on what they should be doing when the rolling men neared them. In the end, they could only watch on as the two tumbled past them.

The three men exchanged glances and silently expressed their shame.

Seeing another person tumbling down, the three men worked together to assist him. One man might not be enough to accomplish the task, but three men working together would be different, right?

One man tumbling down the slope had rolled off course, so only one man could be saved by the three. They marveled at how coincidental this was. Decisively abandoning the other, the three men surged forward to receive the one tumbling before them and easily managed to stop his downward roll.

The man who had rolled down half the mountain continued to howl in pain even when he got rescued. Based on the man's painful cries, the three firmly believed that the rolling men would most likely die if they continued to tumble all the way to the base of the mountain.

"Bro, are you okay?!" Someone shook the man back to his senses.

"Oh?!" The man slowly opened his eyes and was elated beyond words when he realized that he had stopped rolling downward,

profusely thanking Black Index Finger and the others for their help.

“No need to thank us; we’re all in the same mercenary—” Before this man could finish his sentence, he had turned into a beam of white light. Black Index Finger and the other man’s expression changed instantly. They had forgotten about the opponents pursuing them! Black Index Finger quickly helped the man who had rolled downward to his feet and said, “Quick! Climb back up the mountain!”

“Up the mountain?” the person asked, exclaiming, “But it’s dangerous up there!”

“Dangerous?” Black Index Finger asked, baffled, “Isn’t there just one enemy up there?”

While there was indeed only one man on the mountain peak, that man was the most dangerous player in the game.

Spell-casting in Parallel World was split into two steps: first was the name of the spell itself. Just saying it would consume mana; second was the activation word itself. This would let the caster execute the spell.

If only the spell’s name was said, the spell would not work. This meant that no damage could be generated. Just like in the various safe zones in-game, anyone could chant a spell and form it, but the activation word would have no effect.

Once people learned of this, they resolved to dodge upon hearing Mages chant spells. This was why most Mages out there would not shout the incantations; instead, they unanimously chose to quietly utter them, as if whispering sweet nothings to a lover’s ear with great articulation. The words they spoke might sound mellow, yet the spells’ Magic Attack Power would still be just as powerful.

As for Gu Fei, he was not whispering the spell’s incantation at all, “Blazing Tree of a Thousand—”

All ran off just as they heard him chanting. He was THE Insta-kill Mage, so no one doubted the might of his spells. Naturally, they preemptively got themselves to safety rather than risk it. Seeing that Gu Fei was pointing his sword at where they were standing, the men scampered to the mountain edge.

This was precisely what Gu Fei was after. He had cast the spell with every intention to stop short of completing it. He then quickly changed the spell he was chanting and teleported himself at the side of the mountain where The Black Hand's men had gathered. Gu Fei had managed to push the three men before off the edge by using this method.

He has cast Blink twice and Twin Incineration once so far... Monologue under the Moon tallied the spells Gu Fei had cast in his mind as his heart beat with trepidation.

If Gu Fei did not have mana issue and could endlessly cast all the spells he knew... Would there even be room to doubt his capability to insta-kill twenty or even thirty men by himself? What truly puzzled Monologue under the Moon, though, was how Gu Fei could possess quick reaction time that allowed him to effortlessly evade their attacks and dish out unavoidable strikes.

Out of all these players who had directly crossed swords with Gu Fei, one was pushed into friendly fire, another was shoved off the mountain, and three were insta-killed with his Twin Incineration. Three more men were pushed off the mountain moments ago, yet it soon became clear that chanting Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno was just a ruse. Only twelve men were left from the original twenty men that Monologue under the Moon had brought with him on the mountain peak. Right now, Gu Fei's remaining mana was only enough for casting Twin Incineration once and perhaps Blink as well. Monologue under the Moon had been enduring all this while; he even reminded everyone constantly, "Don't panic! He has long casting time. We have plenty of time to evade his spell after hearing his incantation."

This particular weakness of Gu Fei had been said countless times in The Black Hand, yet the Insta-kill Mage's aura was truly oppressive, and none of them was able to act calmly when facing him for real. In fact, all of them had pretty much forgotten about this aspect of his casting speed once they heard him chant.

The Black Hand was very aware of Gu Fei's weakness by now. Monologue under the Moon had exchanged blows with him before as well. Right now, everyone took care to stand apart from one another. They would not let Gu Fei kill three men with one Twin Incineration again; his fake casting to push people off the edge was also found out by everyone present.

Only one spell left... What spell is he going to use? Monologue under the Moon kept his eyes trained on Gu Fei. He can't possibly be thinking of teleporting himself right next to me to shove me off the mountain, right? Although Monologue under the Moon was quite far from the edge, the thought still sent a chill down his spine.

The others shared Monologue under the Moon's sentiment. Despite holding numerical superiority in this fight, they were anxiously waiting to see what Gu Fei would do next.

Gu Fei still had that placid smile on his lips. Evidently, he held the advantage in this fight, and everything had been dictated by him thus far. Pushing an enemy off the mountain, insta-killing three men with one Twin Incineration, unpredictably teleporting himself using Blink....

The Black Hand's members were unable to guard against Gu Fei's actions even now. Presently, no one dared to be near the mountain edge. These players kept themselves evenly spaced out as they trained their eyes on Gu Fei for fear of him suddenly appearing behind their backs.

It was quite cramped when there were twenty of them on the mountain peak together... But it's fine now with just twelve of

them! Gu Fei thought to himself as he stepped forward to begin his assault once more.

Chapter 264 - The Challenger Gu Fei

Gu Fei was facing off against twelve men alone on the mountain peak!

Gu Fei slashed at a Warrior purely because he was near him.

Will this be the fourth spell?! Monologue under the Moon started preparing for this possibility. If Gu Fei cast his fourth spell, he would unhesitatingly command his men to surround Gu Fei.

However, Gu Fei did not say a word. His sword did not glow, either. The Warrior, who had bravely received Gu Fei's slash, happily exclaimed when he saw the minimal damage inflicted on him, "I'm fine! It's just a basic attack!"

Monologue under the Moon did not share his happiness, though. He would rather that Gu Fei insta-killed the Warrior with Twin Incineration. With Gu Fei holding back this bit of mana for one last spell, he could threaten them with his ability to insta-kill a good number of them.

While Monologue under the Moon was feeling aggrieved by the Warrior's utterance, Gu Fei was feeling irked by the man's audacity to call his Gu Family's exquisite sword style a mere 'basic attack'!

Let me see you try and dodge this 'basic attack', then! Gu Fei was barely suppressing his anger from erupting. What sort of players are they, anyway? All they did is gripe about my damage output the entire time. Insta-kill Mage... Didn't they notice that not one of them was able to avoid my attacks? Even the Insta-kill Mage has to hit someone first before he or she can insta-kill a person, right? No point in having high damage output if he or she can't even hit his or her opponents. Take me for example... Gu Fei's head was filled with these thoughts as he cleanly evaded the Warrior's axe.

Gu Fei could easily slip pass such a middling attack with his

upper body alone and could even maim the Warrior with a casual slash if this were a fight in reality. It was truly a pity that this was but a game. The Warrior was still happily waving his axe even after Gu Fei had struck him three more times! “Seems like this guy doesn’t plan to expend mana!”

Idiot! Monologue under the Moon berated the Warrior inside. Gu Fei was only preserving his mana to deter them from surrounding him. Monologue under the Moon raised his hand to call for ranged support. When no one responded to this, he swept his gaze over and discovered that only one Archer was left in their midst.

The Archers and Mages he had brought with him were either insta-killed or thrown off the mountain. Gu Fei had taken care of them ever since the start of the skirmish.

Did he plan this before the fighting even started? Monologue under the Moon broke out in cold sweat. He had thought that Gu Fei’s attacks were him trying to thin their number whenever he could. At this moment, Monologue under the Moon finally realized that Gu Fei’s actions were done to rob them of their ranged attackers. Meanwhile, the melee job classes did not dare to surround him... Did this mean that he was forcing them to engage him in a one-versus-one fight? What a joke! He only has enough mana for one spell. Surely, we can force him to use it sooner or later! Monologue under the Moon steadily bestowed Heal on the Warrior as he called the others to attack Gu Fei together.

“But he still has a spell left!” all the melee players were hesitant.

“It’s just one spell! What’s there to be afraid of?! Death is the only outcome once his mana gets depleted!” Monologue under the Moon reasoned. He purposely said this aloud for Gu Fei to hear him. His plan was to be open about his intention, so that the opponent would be hesitant with his attacks. He wondered what would Gu Fei do now that he was preemptively reminding him of this fact.

Gu Fei's reaction was not reacting to it. His basic attacks were essentially useless in the face of a Priest's Heal, but he still persisted with his attacks without missing a beat. Instead, it was the opposing Warrior that reacted by bellowing as he brandished his axe, "Don't do that just yet!"

Finally, it's here... Gu Fei felt glad when he saw the Warrior's pose. A Warrior's Cyclone! Oh, how long has it been... Gu Fei reminisced about the last time he had encountered the skill, feeling as if eons had passed since then.

Extending the sword in his hand, he threaded it through the attack. Gu Fei flew away from the Cyclone as his sword clashed into the battleaxe with a resounding clang. The Warrior was stunned at first, but he quickly cheered, "A ha ha ha! It's your turn to tumble down the mountain!"

He assumed that Gu Fei would tumble down the mountain the way he flew outward. Gu Fei, for his part, stared at the Warrior disdainfully. He just borrowed the Cyclone's force to fly outward. At any rate, why would he send himself flying off the mountain when he had control over where he was going?

And if he did use the Cyclone's force to fly off the mountain, Gu Fei was certain that he could land firmly on the slope. "Did you think Cyclone is similar to a Fighter's Seismic Toss that renders its victim immobile while being thrown?" It was rare for Gu Fei to express his disdain toward an opponent from a gaming perspective.

The Warrior quickly realized that he had celebrated too soon when he saw that Gu Fei's flying direction would not result into him tumbling down the mountain slope. He was rueful for being unable to avenge his brothers' sufferings under Gu Fei's hands.

Mid-air, Gu Fei kept his sword and took out his Chinese broadsword in the blink of an eye. Using Sacred Flames of Baptism, he cleaved a player beside him as soon as he alighted on

the ground.

That player had long seen that Gu Fei was flying toward him and had actually been feeling quite excited at the prospect of taking down the incoming Mage and pushing him off the mountain! Unexpectedly, Gu Fei cleaved at him just as soon as he landed on the ground.

Sacred Flames of Baptism glowed fiercely as its additional fire attack procced across the person's face.

“He cast a spell!” Several men cheered and excitedly gathered around to begin cutting Gu Fei up, not caring whether their teammate died or survived that one strike.

“Wait! That's not a spell!” Monologue under the Moon felt exasperated as he wondered why his teammates could not seem to think rationally! Had that strike been a spell of Gu Fei, their man would not have been alive. Monologue under the Moon, who had encountered the same attack in his previous fight with Gu Fei, recognized it as a weapon's additional magic attack. While its fiery glow looked similar to Twin Incineration's, the damage it dealt was worlds apart from the spell.

Monologue under the Moon's warning came too late, though. All the melee job classes gritted their teeth and surrounded Gu Fei tightly... Could – Could Gu Fei himself have chosen his landing spot after taking Cyclone head on?

An incredulous expression appeared on Monologue under the Moon's face as his late reminder fell on deaf ears. Those players already beside Gu Fei actually heard his warning, but their blood was boiling within, which made them ignore Monologue under the Moon's advice. Since it was too late for them to escape, they might as well sacrifice some of them to finally eliminate Gu Fei.

It was just a pity that they were unaware of the depth of Gu Fei's fighting prowess.

“Twin Incineration! Incinerate!” Gu Fei swiftly swapped his weapon and cast a spell using Moonlit Nightfalls as he pirouetted about. He turned his waist, and his arm and wrist moved along with it.

He must truly thank those players over by the city gate that day for crossing swords with him.

Because this instant-cast spell had a set time to its execution, Gu Fei had been researching about how many players he could kill with one Twin Incineration. He had previously been adding points to Agility to increase his attack speed and maximize his damage output accordingly. However, that day by the city gate had unintentionally opened Gu Fei’s eyes to his foolishness. He felt saddened and somewhat ashamed of how his thought process had become rigid due to playing this game.

He could have significantly improved his attack range had he coordinated his body’s rotation with his strikes instead of mindlessly adding points to Agility. At present, Gu Fei’s pirouette with Twin Incineration achieved a four-hundred-fifty-degree of motion....

What this meant was that some of the players standing before him would be struck twice by Twin Incineration – a feat that no other Mage could presently achieve.

White lights flashed like fireworks all around Gu Fei. This was a scenario Monologue under the Moon had never thought of. To be exact, he had never considered the possibility of Gu Fei being able to cleanly slay a full circle of players. Gu Fei had just sent six men out of the playing field.

The twenty men with him were now down to just six men. Gu Fei’s mana was completely emptied out at this point, but the remaining six men happened to be made up of three Priests, two Knights, and one Archer... This group composition left Monologue under the Moon in tears. Even if Archers were the most

advantageous against Mages, could they even depend on this remaining Archer to turn the tide right now?

Before Monologue under the Moon could think further, Gu Fei reached his hand out, “Thunderbolt! Strike!”

Lightning came crashing down on the Archer, instantly killing him and saving Monologue under the Moon the trouble of thinking further about this. Gu Fei actually still had some mana left after casting four major spells. His only options were either Fireball or Thunderbolt. Given that the latter was a level 40 spell available only after his Job Class Advancement, it was certainly enough to insta-kill a low HP job class when used in tandem with his overleveled equipment.

Standing defenselessly before Gu Fei were three Priests and two Knights – Parallel World’s well-known non-combat job classes.

Gu Fei was not about to show mercy on them for that, however. He had yet to triumph over Young Master Han’s challenge, after all! Changing his weapon once more, Gu Fei wielded Sacred Flames of Baptism and dove straight toward Monologue under the Moon while re-equipping all the trinkets and gear that increased his additional fire attack’s proc rate. Gu Fei sure had painstakingly expended quite the effort to bait everyone this time.

Chapter 265 - Shoving People atop the Mountain

Monologue under the Moon had no way of parrying Gu Fei's attacks and all he could do to keep himself from dying was get the two Priests beside him to steadily bestow Heal on him. He had positioned the two Priests far from Gu Fei to prevent the latter from interrupting their casting – something Monologue under the Moon had learned to do after his previous fight with Gu Fei. The two Knights blessed themselves with Blessing of Strength, giving them better fighting strength than the Priests at the moment, but it was still not enough to threaten Gu Fei.

Gu Fei did not simply focus his attention on Monologue under the Moon, and he would occasionally turn to give the two Knights a cut or two. Thus, although three men were surrounding the lone Gu Fei, they were the ones that had their hands full trying to block his attacks, giving birth to possibly the world's most lackluster attempt at encirclement.

Monologue under the Moon was feeling quite frustrated, but Black Index Finger and company, who were rushing up the mountain, were actually feeling far worse than him.

Although they had managed to climb two thirds of the mountain by expending quite the effort, the slow movement speed of the Warrior Black Index Finger still made them bristle with anger and feel fearful. The fear they felt did not originate from the two speedsters Sword Demon and Royal God Call that were hot on their heels, however; rather, it was from the sight of the steadily increasing kill points of the opposing team that mirrored their ascent to the mountain.

The Black Hand had six enemies for this match, and five were just right behind them. This meant that the enemy responsible for all the kill points was the one that they could not see at the

moment.

Black Index Finger was just confused at the start, but when Young Master's Elite earned 6 kill points at once, he found himself stopping in his tracks. Thinking about it now, it seemed that he was getting out of the frying pan and into the fire by climbing up this mountain. Black Index Finger could not explain why he had such a thought, so he sent Monologue under the Moon this message when the opponent earned another kill point: "How many men do you have left up there?" Based on the number of members he had left, Black Index Finger could tell that many men had died on the mountain peak, yet he simply could not wrap his head around this fact.

"Five!" Monologue under the Moon was currently in a tight spot; no matter how hard he tried to evade Gu Fei's attacks, he could not seem to avoid them at all. At the moment, he decided to take all the blows coming at him and prioritized replying to Black Index Finger, instead.

"How did that happen?!" Black Index Finger asked, petrified. To be able to defeat fifteen players... Black Index Finger did not doubt that the five remaining players on the mountain peak would be slain by the time he got there himself. Would he not just be sending himself to his death by going up there at this rate?

He sighed audibly at thought of this. It was then that a cry came from someone beside him. When Black Index Finger and his men halted their steps, Royal God Call took that chance to unerringly fire off an arrow at one of them. "What now, Boss Black?" this person asked anxiously. Black Index Finger and company knew that they were currently caught between a rock and a hard place, and they needed to firmly decide on their next step fast. In the meantime, they moved left and right to evade the arrows continuously coming from behind them, making them look like people happily dancing to a tuneless song.

Black Index Finger looked afar and saw that his other teams were

currently rushing over to them. Unfortunately, his reinforcements were in no way faster than the five men who were closing in on them with every passing second. As Black Index Finger hesitated over on what to do, Monologue under the Moon sent him another message: “Where are you, Boss Black? Are there men coming over to help us?”

Monologue under the Moon was very vexed right now. He did not call for back-up just then when his men got reduced to twelve because he thought that they could still eliminate Gu Fei once the latter ran out of mana with his fourth spell, but he soon entered this precarious situation, so he had no choice but to ask for reinforcement now, not knowing that Black Index Finger and company were on their way to them.

“I’m halfway up there,” Black Index Finger replied.

“Please hurry up, then! He’s now out of mana!” Monologue under the Moon exclaimed.

Black Index Finger slightly trembled when he heard this and he hastily urged the two men beside him, “Let’s hurry up the mountain!”

“Why?” one of the two asked.

“The enemy Mage up there is out of mana,” Black Index Finger hurriedly answered. The plan he came up with on the spot was for them to head up the mountain and take down the Mage. The three of them would then form an eight-man team with the five men on the mountaintop and defend themselves against the assault of the five enemies currently chasing after them. Their goal was to stall for time until reinforcements arrived. In that way, even if the eight of them died from making the last stand, they would at least be able to entrap the final five men of Young Master's Elite atop the mountain when the reinforcements arrived, such that they would have no way to escape death. In this way, The Black Hand would achieve victory in this match!

Gu Fei's damage output was now low with his mana depleted, and the men he was facing happened to have two Priests among them. Moreover, the two Knights switched to buffing themselves with Blessing of Health when they realized that there was no point in using Blessing of Strength if they could not land an attack on him. One of the Knights had apparently advanced into a Holy Knight as he had a healing skill in his arsenal. All of them eventually wised up, opting to spread out and take turns healing Monologue under the Moon of the damage dealt on him by Gu Fei.

This went on for quite a while and the men soon realized that they were actually not in such dire straits as they had previously assumed. The Attack Power of the mana-depleted Gu Fei was feeble. If Sacred Flames of Baptism's additional fire attack did not proc, his strikes could directly be ignored, and if the trait did proc, its infrequency could not fluster the person in charge of healing. Since three men were taking turns healing Monologue under the Moon, they could even consume fruit to replenish their expended mana in between, essentially bringing this fight into a stalemate.

Only Monologue under the Moon actually had it hard, as he had unofficially become the dummy for Gu Fei's attacks, decorating his body with cuts, bruises, and even burns! Besides the glum Monologue under the Moon who was taking the brunt of Gu Fei's assault, his teammates were now feeling quite relaxed and would probably sit back and gladly watch Gu Fei's futile performance if they were permitted to do so.

Naturally, Gu Fei was aware of how futile his every action right now was! Back when the three men were surrounding him, he would deliver cuts to his left and right, causing the two Priests to get flustered and to toss Heal haphazardly. Gu Fei was hoping to deplete the Priests' mana this way so that he could slay them one by one. Unfortunately, his opponents were quick-witted enough to see through this plan at their moment of crisis. There was literally no sense in him continuing this fight at this rate.

With that thought in mind, Gu Fei decisively stopped his attacks and returned the Chinese broadsword to his dimensional pocket. As the five men eyed him suspiciously, Gu Fei shrugged his shoulders, “Since I can’t kill you lot, why bother fighting?”

“What are you up to now?!” Monologue under the Moon nervously asked. In his mind, Gu Fei was utterly diabolical and someone who was always up to some tricks.

“Can’t you guys tell that we’ve reached a stalemate? It’s a waste of time to continue on at this rate,” Gu Fei answered before sending Young Master Han this message: “It’s no good. I failed your challenge. I ran out of mana and there are still five of them left. With three Priests and a Holy Knight, there’s no way I can slay them.”

“Hold on; we’re almost there,” was Young Master Han’s reply.

“Really?” Gu Fei walked toward the mountain edge while ignoring The Black Hand’s players around him as if they were air. Honestly speaking, fighting against the two non-combat job classes was boring for Gu Fei. “Your comrades are about to arrive.” The first people Gu Fei spotted as he stood by the mountain edge were of course Black Index Finger and company. Close to them were Royal God Call and Sword Demon, while Young Master Han, War Without Wounds, and Brother Assist trailed behind them all. Further away were the four teams of The Black Hand mercenary group that were coming toward the mountain from separate directions.

Gu Fei standing precariously by the mountain edge was such a tempting sight that one of the Knights could not help but stealthily approach him. When the Knight’s companions realized his intention, silence fell on the mountain peak.

“Sword Demon and Royal, you two run a little faster! Catch up to them!” Gu Fei waved to them animatedly. His fellow mercenaries naturally did not notice his action. As for the Knight, he hurriedly

closed the gap between him and Gu Fei at this moment. He was about to push Gu Fei over the edge when the latter turned around.

The Knight's arms were already outstretched forward. Seeing that Gu Fei had chosen to turn around at this exact moment, the Knight threw caution to the wind and proceeded with his plan to push Gu Fei over the edge.

Gu Fei turning around was no coincidence, though. Quickly turning his body sideways, Gu Fei grabbed one of the Knight's arms and pulled the latter to the trajectory of his push. Speaking of which, the Knight only tried pushing Gu Fei slightly to tip him over. He was not gutsy enough to sacrifice himself just to push Gu Fei off the mountain edge, so his arms merely shot forward ever slightly. Hence, Gu Fei's attempt at amplifying the Knight's forward momentum by pulling him forward was not enough to topple the latter over the edge.

Gu Fei was not about to let this opportunity slip by, though. With his arm pulling the Knight forward, Gu Fei tried to trip the latter using his leg. Few moves that focused on tripping an opponent existed in kung fu. Gu Fei did his best to trip the Knight, but his Strength was just insufficient to accomplish the task. In any case, he still managed to force the Knight to the ground. Since the Knight did not trip or fall, Gu Fei could not even label his attempt as anything but 'forced'.

The two's scuffle was naturally witnessed by the people climbing up the mountain, and these people wondered what sort of epic fight was occurring to necessitate the pair into bringing it near the edge.

The four men on the mountain, meanwhile, took inspiration from the two's struggle; Monologue under the Moon quickly urged the other three, "He's got no mana right now, which means his damage output can practically be ignored. Let's go toss him down now!"

Gu Fei felt stunned when he heard this. Indeed, such a despicable way of fighting was possible in this VRMMO. This often happened when one side held numerical superiority in a fight; the side with more men would tank the enemies' attacks as they tried to grab a hold of the enemies. Back then, Cloud Herder's men had tried doing exactly this when they had crowded around Gu Fei outside a spawn point.

This sort of fighting maneuver was ultimately seen by many players as barbaric and despicable, and they wished not to be associated with it. This opinion only became popular among the skilled players the more they progressed into the game.

Even a rabbit would bite a human when flustered, though! Monologue under the Moon and the remaining men of The Black Hand were bullied by Gu Fei to the point of them discarding their image as they resolutely strode toward him.

Gu Fei was honestly afraid of what these men had set their minds to do. They even ignored the slash he had sent their way and just continued to surround him. With his Mage character's meager Strength, Gu Fei simply had no way to fend them off despite his superb fighting skill in reality. What he needed to do now was avoid them at all cost!

Thus, Gu Fei bitterly ran away from the four men, dodging and weaving through them as they tried to grab a hold of him.

"Whew! Luckily, I have faster movement speed than them." Gu Fei wiped non-existent sweat off his forehead, thinking, If Drifting were the one to run out of mana right now, he would certainly be unable to escape these men!

Chapter 266 - The Flying Gu Fei

Black Index Finger had once stopped in his tracks when he had learned of his men's fate on the mountain peak. Upon reaching the top, he once more found himself standing rooted to the spot.

The mountain top had limited space, yet Gu Fei and the four members of The Black Hand appeared as if they were currently playing a game of chase. The atmosphere was somewhat lively and harmonious, making Black Index Finger wonder if he had just been transported to an alternate dimension.

Amid Monologue under the Moon and his men's cries of: "Over there!", "Block him!", and so on, Gu Fei spotted Black Index Finger bounding toward him with undisguised glee and he promptly yelled, "Let's have a duel!" Gu Fei had had enough of this comedic situation by now.

Black Index Finger had yet to make sense of things on this mountain peak when Gu Fei greeted him with a sword slash. The flames that lit Gu Fei's blade gave Black Index Finger quite the fright, thinking that he was a goner against Gu Fei's Twin Incineration. But when he saw his HP barely dip, he quickly calmed down. Indeed, most players struggled to discern the minute visual difference between Sacred Flames of Baptism's additional fire attack and Twin Incineration's effect at first glance.

Monologue under the Moon also spotted Black Index Finger at this point, yet Gu Fei was the one who stood beside their group leader and solemnly told them, "Alright. Enough games. Let's properly fight now!"

Black Index Finger took Gu Fei's words as a cue to send a sword slash at the latter while he told his other men climbing up the mountain, "Quickly take care of him!"

They were an Archer and a Thief respectively; one quickly distanced himself from Gu Fei, while another went to his side to

conduct a pincer attack with Black Index Finger.

With three Priests and a Holy Knight present, Gu Fei's every action was still useless, yet he still could not help but sigh in relief. At least, the opponents were no longer resorting to using such a despicable method that had them attempting to throw him down the mountain by ganging up on him. Knowing that Royal God Call and Sword Demon would arrive soon, he spiritedly engaged the enemies in a fight.

Black Index Finger thought it would be easy to deal with a mana-depleted Mage. He was even unwilling to use Cyclone on him, yet he soon discovered that Gu Fei's fighting prowess was far more extraordinary than what was rumored. He could not seem to land even one slash on Gu Fei no matter how hard he tried, whereas the latter's Chinese broadsword easily found its way to his body numerous times.

The Thief attacking from the other direction felt even more humiliated. While Gu Fei was incessantly moving around Black Index Finger as he dished out attacks, the Thief was fruitlessly chasing after his butt. The Thief could only wait for Gu Fei to slow down so that he could land his attack on the latter, but Gu Fei just moved faster and faster, instead. When the Thief tried attacking from the opposite direction, Gu Fei merely matched his movement, and the chase would repeat itself. The Thief had been on the mountain peak for quite some time, yet he had not even landed a blow on his target. All he had accomplished was circle around Black Index Finger until even the latter grew nauseated following him.

There was also the Archer who could not even fire off an arrow with Homing Projectile because he could never seem to be able to set his reticle on the constantly moving Gu Fei. When he finally shot an arrow, it dug into Black Index Finger instead, scaring him from firing a second arrow.

Monologue under the Moon got everyone to focus their Heal on

Black Index Finger, which resulted into Black Index Finger angrily bellowing, “Just one healer will do! Everyone else should come and surround this twerp!” He still had his dignity as a leader to consider. He did not wish to be treated as a punching bag like Monologue under the Moon was being treated moments ago.

Monologue under the Moon wanted to say that the few of them would be unable to surround Gu Fei properly, but he kept quiet in the end. Simply saying that Gu Fei was formidable would only sound absurd. Everyone in The Black Hand had laughed at him when he had told them of Gu Fei’s extraordinary fighting capability after failing his mission the other day. Honestly speaking, Monologue under the Moon even felt somewhat sated, as if he had gotten his revenge on his fellow teammates, when Gu Fei decimated his twenty-man team just then.

At their group leader’s command, the three Priests and one Knight came over to surround Gu Fei. As Monologue under the Moon had expected, Gu Fei’s fast movement speed made it so that even the Priests could not get near him as he nimbly moved about; Black Index Finger ended up chasing after Gu Fei just like the Thief.

The mountain peak was once more filled with cries of “Over here!”, “Block him!”, and so on. These lines seemed to echo the ones he had heard earlier when he had just arrived on the mountaintop, making Black Index Finger think, Seems like I’ve really entered an alternate dimension....

This stalemate on the mountain peak was broken by an arrow’s shrill scream. With Royal God Call and Sword Demon’s arrival, Gu Fei wiped the sweat off his forehead, “You guys are finally here!”

Royal God Call marveled teasingly, “So there are situations where you have trouble holding on as well?”

“It’s not ‘hold on’ but ‘kill on’,” Gu Fei rectified, supplying, “There are many Priests. If only there weren’t any....”

Monologue under the Moon's ego received bruising when he heard that. He had previously been bemoaning his team's lack of damage dealers when they were down to three Priests and two Knights and had been fantasizing about what it would be like if they had more combat job classes. Hearing Gu Fei's words now... Such a team composition would apparently only lead to their deaths!

Meanwhile, Black Index Finger's expression turned deathly pale. After experiencing how troublesome it was to deal with Gu Fei, he no longer doubted the latter's capability to stall for time until the match's end. Since Gu Fei's allies were now in this location, the other three were probably nearby. Did the few of them have a chance to survive until their reinforcements arrived?

More importantly, Black Index Finger had no way out now. Seven men were with him on this mountaintop; besides the Thief and Archer he had brought, the rest had slow movement speed.

"Charge!" Royal God Call roared as he shot an arrow at the enemy Archer. Sword Demon activated Fleetfoot and dashed toward the enemy Thief.

The Archer was the man Black Index Finger and company had saved from tumbling down the base of the mountain. He did not have full HP to begin with, so he failed to survive the Snipe Royal God Call had fired off at him despite the many Priests present.

With an angry bellow, Black Index Finger hurtled himself toward Royal God Call using Charge.

The veteran combatant Royal God Call quickly shuffled to the side at the sight of Black Index Finger charging at him. Black Index Finger charged right up to him and extended his sword to activate Cyclone – a two-skill motion that any Warrior worth his or her salt would be able to execute.

Royal God Call was distressed by this assault and scampered away to evade Black Index Finger's Cyclone.

Accordingly, Black Index Finger canceled the skill to conserve his Rage points. Gu Fei thought that an opportunity was present, so he quickly closed in on Black Index Finger. Gu Fei slashed at him and extended his hand to push Black Index Finger over the edge. He was hoping to send the latter rolling down the mountain by catching him off guard.

This was a wrong move, though. A huge gap existed between a Mage's and a Warrior's Strength to the point that the latter easily suppressed the former. The adage 'A strong man can easily overpower ten martial artists' really held some truth. The technique that Gu Fei had used on the Knight before was useless before a Warrior's Strength. Gu Fei's push did not even move Black Index Finger an inch. In fact, his attempt resulted into the latter reflexively grabbing and tossing him away.

"Wonderful!" Monologue under the Moon was moved when he saw this. That's why he's the boss. He only had to shoot his hand out once and he easily dealt with the troublesome Mage.

Black Index Finger was actually taken aback by this. What he had just done was a conditioned reflex that even Gu Fei had trouble reacting in time. Agility's impact to movement speed was obvious in this game, yet things like attack speed were not as exaggerated. If a Warrior's attack speed was eight times slower than a Thief's Agility, then no Warrior would be able to fight anyone in Parallel World no matter how strong he or she was!

Sigh... That's too careless of me! Gu Fei reflected on this while mid-air. Once more, he lamented his Strength or lack thereof as he adjusted his posture to regain his balance.

When Black Index Finger returned to his senses, he immediately realized that he had done something huge. He excitedly looked backward to watch Gu Fei's tumble down the mountain, but all he saw was the latter landing safely on the slope.

"Sword Demon and Royal, hold on for a bit!" Gu Fei shouted

toward the mountain peak's direction. Fishing out an apple to munch on, he decided to replenish his mana instead of promptly heading back to the combat zone.

Monologue under the Moon's expression changed when he heard Gu Fei's shout. How was he fine after being tossed off the mountain peak like that? He ran toward the mountain edge, looked down, and saw Gu Fei calmly eating an apple. Turning his head over, he and Black Index Finger exchanged looks. "We can't let him recover his mana!" Monologue under the Moon was about to cry.

Black Index Finger was well aware of this fact as well. However, he could only regret using so much strength in that toss that he managed to send Gu Fei sailing so far away. Even if they ran toward Gu Fei now, they would be unable to stop him....

In a last-ditch effort, Monologue under the Moon flung out Holy Ball, which merely drifted toward Gu Fei. Gu Fei did not dodge the attack and instead saved those precious seconds to recover a bit more mana. When Holy Ball landed on him, his mana recovery was interrupted. Nonetheless, Gu Fei already managed to replenish a quarter of his total mana. With a chuckle, he shouted, "I'm coming back!" He then pulled out Moonlit Nightfalls and rushed toward the mountain peak.

"We're doomed..." Monologue under the Moon was a meticulous person and he had been observing Gu Fei's fighting style, hoping to find any weakness. He did not find any, but he became aware of Gu Fei's fighting habit. Gu Fei would wield his Chinese broadsword whenever he ran out of mana, and he would change it to that non-appraisable sword whenever he had mana.

Actually, Sword Demon and Royal God Call had almost finished decimating the players on the mountain peak by themselves. The enemy Thief died under the two's joint assault without giving the enemy Priests ample time to Heal him. They then bullied the two Priests and one Knight in a relaxed manner. All the while, Black

Index Finger and Monologue under the Moon were lamenting about Gu Fei's recovery of his mana over by the mountain edge!

What else was there to say about the ensuing scene? Black Index Finger, Monologue under the Moon, the two Priests, and a Knight had slow movement speed, so it was essentially impossible for them to escape from Gu Fei, Sword Demon or Royal God Call at this point. They could also not rely on the three-man healing method that they had used before since Gu Fei and company could easily insta-kill any job classes by cooperating with one another.

Black Index Finger might be tough, but he could still not survive the combined damage output of Sword Demon's Backstab, Royal God Call's Snipe, and Gu Fei's Twin Incineration!

The rest of The Black Hand on the mountaintop was handily eliminated in this way. The three men of Young Master's Elite headed to the mountain edge and surveyed the land below. Young Master Han and the two others were almost about to reach them, while The Black Hand's four teams that were supposed to support the now eliminated Black Index Finger were making their way over to this highly contested vantage point as well.

Chapter 267 - Cleaning up the PvP field

Now that the mountain peak was spick and span, Young Master Han, War Without Wounds, and Brother Assist quickly made their way over.

“Comrades, thank you for your hard work!” Young Master Han smiled to the other three members of Young Master’s Elite.

“Tsk!” No one bothered to reply to him. Gu Fei almost threw Young Master Han off the mountain when he saw him putting on airs. They were evidently the ones doing the fighting, yet Young Master Han made it seem as if he was the final boss. Just seeing him stand by the mountain edge with his priest robe swaying in the breeze, any distant onlookers would think that he was a person of heroic proportions.

With this thought, Young Master Han pointed toward a path leading to the mountaintop where a team was currently traveling on, “Miles, I’ll leave that team to you.”

“Oh?” Gu Fei glanced over as he continued to munch on an apple.

“Royal, pester that team over there!” Young Master Han pointed toward another team.

Royal God Call determinedly slung his bow across his back and said, “I’m off!” He then took his leave from the mountain peak.

“Sword Demon, deal with that team over there!” Young Master Han pointed toward the third team.

“Won’t Sword Demon have trouble by himself?” Brother Assist cautioned. Sword Demon was not an Archer, after all; although he had fast movement speed, Sword Demon’s need to get into melee range made his task a lot riskier than Royal God Call’s.

“It’s fine.” Sword Demon calmly followed Royal God Call down the mountain.

“Nothing for me again, huh?” War Without Wounds was feeling quite miserable. A Warrior essentially relied on high HP and defense to fight opponents. Guerilla style of fighting was definitely not a Warrior’s strong suit. Fighting many opponents at once was only possible if the Warrior’s equipment was vastly superior compared to those he or she would be facing. Considering that most members of The Black Hand were at level 39 to 40, it was highly unlikely that he would have a huge advantage against them even if his equipment was a bit better than theirs right now.

“Stay here since you’ve got nothing to do!” Young Master Han sat cross-legged by the mountain edge, took out two bottles of liquor from his dimensional pocket, and offered it to the two with him, “Want some?”

War Without Wounds and Brother Assist shook their heads. Young Master Han set one bottle beside him and held the other up, mumbling, “It’s not cold enough.” He then popped open the bottle and took a long draft from it. With that, he happily surveyed the mountain side.

“Wait. There are a total of four teams left. We’ve got three teams locked down, so what about the last one?” Brother Assist was fretting over nothing again.

“Fourth team? That’s for Miles, too,” Young Master Han replied.

“Eh?! But you didn’t tell him!” Brother Assist exclaimed.

“No need. Those guys will look for him themselves,” Young Master Han answered confidently.

Brother Assist looked down the mountain and got what he meant.

Three individuals were headed straight toward their respective enemy teams. Although he could not see each of them clearly, he could tell them apart from their fighting styles.

The figure that was maintaining a safe distance from his enemies

was naturally Royal God Call. Brother Assist could not see the arrows he was firing off, but he could see the ten-man team running all over the place as Royal God Call kited them.

The figure that suddenly disappeared as he was jogging over was undoubtedly Sword Demon. He appeared right in front of the enemy formation before quickly running off. He was utilizing such a dangerous and arduous method.

The two teams were originally advancing uniformly, but they became disorderly after encountering the two figures. However, their disorderliness was nothing compared to how the third team had descended into chaos upon Gu Fei's appearance. The three men atop the mountain watched as a burst of flames twinkled in the distance, followed by a circle of white lights ascending the land. A small clearing was instantly made right in the middle of the team.

Gu Fei mercilessly slaughtered everyone he saw with impunity. His ability to affect a wide area with Twin Incineration made his attack resemble a Warrior's Cyclone. The entire ten-man team was thus massacred in a short while. One man survived, but before he could flee, lightning crackled on his head, transforming him into a beam of white light.

The three men on the mountain peak were dumbfounded at what they had just witnessed. Young Master Han sighed deeply as he firmly gripped his bottle. To think watching Miles fight from above actually makes him seem more OP!

Gu Fei then motionlessly stood on the grassland by himself once he defeated the entire team. The three men uproariously laughed at this, "Is that idiot eating an apple again?"

As for the fourth team, the players in it had changed their course to where Gu Fei was once he had started fighting the third team. As Young Master Han had predicted, any team Gu Fei met would seek assistance from others, so arranging anyone to take care of

the fourth team was unnecessary, as the team would deliver itself to Gu Fei.

Who would expect Gu Fei to be so indomitable, though? He massacred an entire team so quickly before the fourth team could make it halfway to the given coordinates. Anyone with a brain would realize that he or she was simply courting death by going like this, so it was no wonder that the team halted its movement.

Gu Fei was obviously alone on the open field, yet the ten-man team a distance away was hesitant to come over.

“Are you done eating an apple?” Young Master Han messaged Gu Fei privately.

Gu Fei snorted in contempt, “I’m eating a banana.”

“Once you’re done, head over to 267, 324. There’s another team over there,” Young Master Han commanded.

“Got it,” Gu Fei immediately set off from the grassland to the given coordinates. This was perhaps one of the perks of having low mana; fully recovering all of it would not take much time.

The fourth team began to make its move after hesitating for a while. However, the team did not head over to where Gu Fei was and instead went to where the other two teams were. Clearly, the other two teams received a similar instruction as they ignored Royal God Call and Sword Demon’s harassment and headed to a rendezvous point to form up the three teams into one platoon. Their intention was unfortunately seen clearly by Young Master Han. Their forming speed was not faster than Gu Fei’s chasing speed....

In the blink of an eye, Gu Fei caught up to the fourth team and the same scene was repeated once over. A flare of chaotic movement gave way to an empty clearing around him. He then pursued the stragglers, leaving the last one to die by a lightning strike before the person could flee... All ten men were thus

decimated.

The Black Hand had eighty-seven participants for this match. When Gu Fei and Sword Demon ambushed the first team on the mountain top, Drifting and two other players were killed off. The scout Xiaoying in the small forest was assassinated by Sword Demon and Royal God Call. Gu Fei's second assault on the mountain peak killed off another three-man team. Later, a ten-man team met death at the hands of Young Master Han and the other four of Young Master's Elite. Gu Fei displayed his fighting prowess once more by taking down the twenty-man team under Monologue under the Moon's supervision on the mountain top. Black Index Finger led a four-man party into the welcoming embrace of Gu Fei on the mountain while being pursued by the rest of Young Master's Elite; they too had an ill-fated ending.

From then onward, Young Master's Elite pretty much had full control of the PvP arena. With Young Master Han, Brother Assist, and War Without Wounds camping on the map's vantage point, the other three members of their mercenary group began to wage guerilla warfare on the enemy teams. Gu Fei took down two entire teams numbering up to twenty men, while Sword Demon and Royal God Call managed to kill off about five men throughout the process of their harassment.

By now, The Black Hand lost sixty-six men, leaving them with only twenty-one players on the PvP arena.

Out of these remaining twenty-one players, six were previously sent to the various forests in the map to lie in wait for the appearance of their prey. Unexpectedly, the prey that they had been waiting for all this while bit off quite a lot of the hunters by now. The six immediately left the relative safety of the forests for the rendezvous point once they received the order to gather with the rest of The Black Hand. On their way to the meeting place, they saw the opponents' score steadily rising as their mercenary group's number dwindled until they reached their current number.

The group of fifteen men that these six players now met was the remnants of the previous two teams. They all exchanged anxious looks as their hearts thumped with trepidation. Their mercenary channel was silent. Before the match began, all were gamely discussing just how they would find the enemies hiding somewhere in the map and were even wondering on how they could encircle and intercept them properly. Who would have guessed that the reality was far from what they had presumed? At the rate that this match was going, their opponents were not only about to win, they might even achieve total victory.

The eliminated Black Index Finger gnashed his teeth and said, “Disperse and let them do the searching! Drag it out till the end of the match. I’d rather die than let them achieve a ‘perfect victory’ from us!”

The rules for this mercenary PvP tournament clearly stated that all the enemies should retire first before one casualty was taken on their end for a group to achieve ‘perfect victory’. ‘Perfect victory’ would not be awarded if the match’s result was decided after the timer ran out. Not only would achieving ‘perfect victory’ give the winning team a greater reward, the system would also gloriously announce the outcome over on the world channel. Mercenary groups were like businesses that let players gain benefits based on their abilities. Losing to a small mercenary group like Young Master’s Elite was already embarrassing; giving them a ‘perfect victory’ was even more so. Could The Black Hand dare promote itself by using the title of being the number one mercenary group in Yunduan City after this fiasco?

With this order, the remaining members of The Black Hand scattered across the PvP arena. Young Master’s Elite only had six players. They were bound to waste a lot of time finding all twenty-one players all over the map now. It was time for them to have a little taste of the vileness of their Grand Kiting strategy.

The Black Hand’s players were currently rejoicing over their

small victory of preventing the enemies from achieving ‘perfect victory’.

Unfortunately for The Black Hand, Young Master Han was currently enjoying the view of the whole map from the mountaintop as he drank liquor. He provided the others with fresh coordinates, allowing the three men below the mountain to hunt down The Black Hand’s remaining members. Even War Without Wounds managed to join in on the fun. Slowly making his way to the coordinates Young Master Han had given him, he planned to earn some kill points.

The Black Hand’s original plan was to avoid dividing its manpower and to work as a coordinated unit. Now that the match was nearing its end, this plan headed to the opposite direction. Separating from one another... This was in many ways a huge insult to The Black Hand for playing into the hands of Young Master’s Elite.

Every player below the mountain ran around the PvP arena like headless flies, except that the hunters were receiving superb directions from Young Master Han; they first eliminated those members who hid themselves inside forests before chasing after those who ran around the map.

With the combination of precise directions and the three’s movement speed, it was naturally not impossible for Young Master’s Elite to successfully hunt down each of the enemy players. Their kill points continued to increase until they collected eighty-six of the enemies, leaving just one more member to achieve ‘perfect victory’.

“Mmm... There’s still one out there that has yet to appear. Assuming that every forest would be hiding one of them, the last person should be hiding in the forest at 145, 421,” Young Master Han deduced.

Gu Fei had been hunting all night; it was only at this moment

that he remembered something. Thinking for a bit, he pulled up his friends list and sent Xi Xiaotian a message: “Hey. We’re down to the last one. Is it you?”

“Heh... You guys are pretty awesome!”

“Where are you? Just come out and stop wasting time.”

“Come and find me, then. I wanna have a duel with you!” Xi Xiaotian replied.

“That just sounds fishy!” Gu Fei blanched.

“Are you afraid?”

“Why would I be?”

“398, 137!” Xi Xiaotian sent Gu Fei her coordinates.

Ha ha! Guess even Young Master has times when he miscalculates. These coordinates are the opposite direction of where he thought the last person would be hiding! Gu Fei thought to himself as he sprinted toward Xi Xiaotian’s location to duel with her.

Chapter 268 - A Bizarre Death

Gu Fei headed to the coordinates Xi Xiaotian had given him as he typed on the mercenary channel: “The last person isn’t at the place you mentioned. I’ll head over to her location now to take care of her!”

“Her? The last person is a woman?!” It could not be denied that all were talented in their own ways. War Without Wounds and Royal God Call were more affected by this detail, so their response came faster than Young Master Han’s.

“Mmm...” Gu Fei replied nonchalantly.

“Is she a babe?” the two quickly asked.

“Yeah...” Gu Fei could not refute this truth!

“Where is she?!” the two demanded in unison.

As Gu Fei reported the coordinates, Royal God Call laughed maniacally, “Hey, Wounds, do you think you can get there faster than me?”

“Stop squabbling and maintain a clean channel, you lot!” Young Master Han irritably ordered. What was the point of maintaining a clean channel now that they had gotten to this stage of the fight, though?

“Are you sure that this person is at the location you have indicated?” Young Master Han asked. Honestly speaking, the difference in her location and the coordinates Young Master Han had given was a slap to this narcissist’s face.

“This...” Young Master Han’s question made Gu Fei hesitate. Xi Xiaotian was a swindler, after all! What if this was just an elaborate ruse? Besides, she had told him prior to the match that she was very despicable... There was no way things were as simple as it seemed!

“Sword Demon, you should still head over to the forest I’ve indicated just in case!” Young Master Han could tell that Gu Fei was uncertain.

“Got it!” Sword Demon acknowledged and left.

Young Master Han could no longer continue enjoying his drink while sitting. Tossing the bottle away, he got up and looked at the location Gu Fei had mentioned. Eventually, he glumly said, “Sword Demon, no need to head there. That person is really in the location Miles has mentioned.”

“Eh?”

“The person is really at the coordinates Miles has mentioned,” Young Master Han repeated.

Brother Assist, who was beside Young Master Han, also saw a solitary figure standing at the said location and attested to this.

“Oh. I’ll head over there, then,” Gu Fei declared as he resumed his progress to the location.

“I’m going, as well.” Royal God Call would never miss a chance like this to look at a woman.

“Miles, will you be lenient to this babe?” War Without Wounds asked tentatively.

“Nope,” Gu Fei answered firmly.

“Sigh... I won’t head over, then.” War Without Wounds was expecting his answer after witnessing Gu Fei’s previous merciless assault against Amethyst Rebirth. This PvP fanatic certainly did not know of the concept of chivalry toward women.

“You guys go ahead; I’ll update you all if she makes any further movement,” Young Master Han instructed and sat down once more. Fishing out a bottle of liquor, he readied himself to demonstrate his ability to discern coordinates easily. However, the person merely stood at the same location and did not move to

leave. Young Master Han felt slightly aggrieved at this, as he could not demonstrate this talent of his.

Gu Fei sprinted over to the given coordinates. Royal God Call, for his part, progressed toward the final member of The Black Hand quite differently. He headed east for a bit before proceeding to the west. He then veered slightly to the north and then to the south. In the end, he moaned on the mercenary channel: “I can’t find the coordinates at all!”

“Ha ha ha ha! You’re an idiot with no sense of direction! To think you wanna take a look at this babe. Get yourself lost in the forest, instead!” It was War Without Wounds’ turn to gloat.

“Young Master, help! Tell me where to go!” Royal God Call implored.

“Forget it. Miles is already there. He’ll probably kill the enemy in two seconds tops. Just stay where you are!” was Young Master Han’s lackadaisical response. Royal God Call’s poor sense of direction was extremely troublesome. While Gu Fei and Sword Demon only needed to hear the coordinates to navigate around, Royal God Call required constant directions, which wasted a lot of his effort and time. Eventually, he just randomly provided him a direction to run in a straight line, leaving the latter to encounter the enemies hiding in the map by chance! Royal God Call had Eagle Eye, anyway, so he was more than capable of discovering the enemies by himself.

Over by the open field at 398, 137, Xi Xiaotian was motionlessly sitting by herself when she saw Gu Fei get near her. Gu Fei stopped when he was three meters away from Xi Xiaotian and stared at her with vigilance.

“You’re here!” Xi Xiaotian cheerfully stood up.

“Yup. You’re the only one left in your team now; do we even need to fight? Just forfeit!” Gu Fei said. Although forfeiting from the match would essentially remove the kill point she presented

for the match, Young Master's Elite would still attain a 'perfect victory'.

"What? Afraid of fighting me?" Xi Xiaotian taunted as she raised her bandage-wrapped fists, strongly resembling a Fighter. Gu Fei remembered that her job class was an Archer, though!

"Are you sure you want to fight with me? You know I don't pull my punches!" Gu Fei reminded her. When they had first met each other, Gu Fei had wounded Xi Xiaotian by hitting her with a flying dagger. That was the first and only time Gu Fei had heavily injured someone in Parallel World; his PvP encounters afterward were never that brutal. He did not know if this was due to the players being low level or the equipment being mediocre that made it easy to inflict heavy injury... He even wondered if the game company had judged that such wounds were too realistic and discreetly adjusted the settings....

To be fair, games that depicted such severe injuries were a little overkill. The ultimate theme of most games was combat, so players would often engage in fights to increase their PvP might. For an injury to be so realistically depicted... Was this a game or a form of capital punishment?

"Don't worry; I have lots of experience getting killed. I've seen all sorts of formation by now!" Xi Xiaotian giggled.

"If that's the case..." Gu Fei pulled out his sword. He was never hesitant to be merciless at anyone; it was just that Xi Xiaotian seemed to always have some sort of scheme in motion whenever they crossed paths.

"Translocation! Blink!" Gu Fei chanted at a volume that only he and the system could register. Most expert Mages had grasped this chanting technique by now. Rumors even had it that Mages in Parallel World could clearly vocalize in hushed tones the lyrics of songs whenever they visited karaoke lounges!

Gu Fei appeared behind Xi Xiaotian in the same moment he

disappeared before her. Xi Xiaotian had clearly picked up a thing or two after being hunted often in Parallel World; instinctively realizing the danger that was about to befall her, she quickly sidestepped and gleefully turned around, “Ha ha! You’ve fallen for my trap—”

Xi Xiaotian halted her words at the sight of Gu Fei pointing a sword to the ground. Although her trap indeed got sprung, its jaws were actually clamping tightly on to Gu Fei’s sword.

Gu Fei was all smiles. “The times you got killed must be lower than the times I killed.” After saying this, he unearthed the trap with his sword and pried it off, “The fact that you made it to level 40 goes to show that you’re lying about having ‘lots of experience dying’.”

“He he... You got me.” Xi Xiaotian was still calm.

“Your movement is too slow. I clearly remember you being nimble from before... What changed?” Gu Fei asked.

“You can tell that from the steps I took?!” Xi Xiaotian asked, feeling shocked.

“Of course. I’m an expert fighter, after all,” Gu Fei replied.

“You’re very formidable, indeed. More than what the rumors say,” Xi Xiaotian sighed.

“Thanks for the praise. What exactly are you up to, anyway?” The more Gu Fei thought about this, the more he felt that there was more to this than what met the eye. Xi Xiaotian could not have possibly called him over just to ensnare him with her Hunting Trap, right? Even if Gu Fei had stepped on to the trap, it would have only limited his mobility; anyone trapped would still be able to conduct attacks. Moreover, Gu Fei could have sent an attack or two her way with how slow Xi Xiaotian had dodged his first strike just then.

“He he... Make a guess!” Xi Xiaotian teased.

“Sigh... Forget it. It’s getting quite late, so let’s end this!” Gu Fei lifted his sword and got right up to Xi Xiaotian in one step. She tried dodging his attack once more, but her movement speed was really too slow today. Gu Fei no longer wished to continue playing this guessing game and merely chanted Twin Incineration’s incantation under his breath as he unhesitatingly delivered an oblique cut at her.

White light engulfed his vision.

Gu Fei had never encountered an Archer that could not be insta-killed by his Twin Incineration, and Xi Xiaotian was no exception. Except... Gu Fei felt that the beam of white light was larger than normal. It was almost as if it was including him, as well!

“What is going on here?!” Gu Fei was astounded upon seeing his HP get reduced to zero in an instant. Still basking in the white light, Xi Xiaotian’s right hand mimed holding a gun and she pointed it to Gu Fei before taking aim with one eye closed, “Bang!”

Xi Xiaotian disappeared, dragging the flabbergasted and bewildered Gu Fei with her.

The remaining five players in the PvP arena were shocked to receive the system notification for Gu Fei’s death.

“What sort of demoness is she? She actually managed to commit double-suicide with the Terminator-like Miles!” War Without Wounds exclaimed in disbelief.

“Young Master, did you see what had happened on the mountain?” Sword Demon was equally surprised. With Gu Fei’s ability to decimate even a ten-man group easily, just what sort of person could actually take down Gu Fei alone? Although the woman died as well, this was still an unbelievable feat.

Young Master Han and Brother Assist exchanged looks. The two had actually been chatting and had not been monitoring the fight’s direction. Thus, both of them did not have the slightest idea on

what had caused the death of Gu Fei.

“Let’s ask Miles. He knows that woman; maybe he can tell us how he got assassinated...” Brother Assist suggested.

“F*ck!” Young Master Han threw the bottle of liquor in his hand down the mountain. The system began tabulating the match’s result and Gu Fei’s death caused Young Master’s Elite to be unable to achieve ‘perfect victory’. Brother Assist saw Young Master Han’s dissatisfaction over this outcome and hurriedly consoled him, “It’s still fine. The game official clearly said before that ‘perfect victory’ will only affect the experience point and gold coin rewards and won’t affect the special prize in any way.”

Young Master Han appeared to not have heard his words as he looked in the direction where the two people had disappeared and spat, “What nonsense! To actually drop the ball at the most crucial moment!”

Chapter 269 - Reflect Damage

Every time a match ended in the two tournaments, the system would calculate the result while the victors remained inside the PvP arena map before sending them out in a short while. The Black Hand mercenary group had long been outside the PvP arena. When it was time to confirm their losses, most of them quickly departed from the square outside the Hall of Mercenaries. Not one of them was in the mood to look at the happy expressions of the victors. At the moment, the teleportation array by the Hall of Mercenaries was devoid of players.

When Gu Fei was sent out of the PvP arena, the only person he saw was Xi Xiaotian who had died together with him. At this moment, the system announced the final result. Naturally, Young Master's Elite emerged victorious. The Black Hand's players assumed that their plan to prevent Young Master's Elite from causing them further embarrassment by achieving 'perfect victory' had failed.

When that did not happen, the perplexed members of The Black Hand quickly checked the result of the mercenary PvP tournament's finals.

Total Score

Young Master's Elite - 87

The Black Hand - 1

"Someone among us managed to kill one of them?!" Even the members of The Black Hand found this hard to believe. After Black Index Finger had instructed the remaining players to spread out, hide, or run from Young Master's Elite, they had seen each of those players rapidly get methodically eliminated. The entire mercenary group was absolutely gutted when this happened, so none stayed behind to wait for the shameful result.

Hence, they did not know who had managed to kill off one member of Young Master's Elite. Black Index Finger was still ecstatic at such a result and clamored on the mercenary channel, "Who is it?! Who among us managed to kill one of their players?! Also, which one did you kill?!"

Not one person spoke up.

"What the heck?! Is it a trend to remain anonymous after doing a good deed now?" Black Index Finger criticized. He knew that only twenty-one players had remained in the PvP arena from his mercenary group after his death. Only these twenty-one players had had the chance to prevent Young Master's Elite from seizing a 'perfect victory', so only someone among them could have done the killing. Black Index Finger unfortunately did not know each of these remaining twenty-one members; he found it rather strange that no one was claiming the honor for the feat of killing an enemy at the moment, though.

The mercenary channel was filled with chattering about the matter. There were hundreds of different guesses, but the final conclusion they came to was that perhaps someone among Young Master's Elite had accidentally died from falling down the mountain. No one would have believed such a bizarre death to be a feasible explanation, but after quite a few of them had suffered such a fate from today's match, everyone was more than happy to accept such a reason for their enemies failing to achieve 'perfect victory'.

"It is retribution!" everyone cheered on the mercenary channel.

At this moment, the five other members of Young Master's Elite exited the PvP arena. They felt quite surprised upon seeing that no one was by the teleportation to receive them. Before the others could react to this, Young Master Han coldly asked while sweeping his gaze around, "Miles, where the hell did you die off to?!"

The five hurriedly sent Gu Fei a message when they could not

find him.

“Wait a moment. I have something on!” was Gu Fei’s reply.

“We’ll be waiting at Ray’s Bar,” Young Master Han coldly replied before leaving with a blackened expression.

“Isn’t your reaction a bit too much?” Royal God Call asked. While they felt somewhat saddened for not achieving ‘perfect victory’, none of them was incensed about it like him. It was already a miracle that their six-man mercenary group managed to defeat an eighty-seven-man mercenary group, so what more could they ask for?

“Young Master is too much of a perfectionist!” Brother Assist sighed.

“A man who’s not content is like a snake that tries to swallow an elephant whole,” War Without Wounds philosophized.

“Sword Demon, go appease him or something,” Royal God Call said to Sword Demon.

“Let’s get to the bar first!” Sword Demon simply said.

Gu Fei was actually not far from the teleportation array and had merely followed Xi Xiaotian to an adjacent street.

“What happened? How did I die?” Gu Fei could not stop himself from blurting out this question. This question ricocheted in his head a hundred and eighty times in just this short walk; he considered every small detail and was absolutely certain that Xi Xiaotian had not done any strange motion and that he had not received the slightest bit of damage from any angle earlier.

How did I die? Gu Fei asked this question to himself numerous times as he chased after Xi Xiaotian.

“‘Reflect damage’,” Xi Xiaotian only replied to his question when they reached this particular street.

“‘Reflect damage’? What’s that?” Gu Fei asked.

“Haven’t you played MMOs before? Why don’t you know of this?” Xi Xiaotian rolled her eyes.

“I seldom play games, actually,” Gu Fei confessed.

Xi Xiaotian felt exasperated and began to lecture Gu Fei about it, “It’s really simple. All the equipment I currently have reflects damage with a 32% proc rate at a degree of 47%. This means that there’s a 32% chance of reflecting damage by 47% when someone attacks me. This 47% reflected damage ignores all defense and resistance. So, expert, you have essentially just insta-killed yourself.”

“I see...” With such a simple reason, Gu Fei immediately understood everything. If it was based on his damage... Gu Fei roughly calculated his equipment, skill, and Spell Damage and realized that 47% reflected damage was enough to kill him off. Gu Fei had low HP and did not have any equipment that increased this, so he was weaker in this aspect than most Mages.

“Hold on. Something doesn’t add up!” Gu Fei at least had some gaming knowledge after playing Parallel World for so long. “When I was trying to killing you, my total damage should be done on to your total HP, so the damage reflected from me shouldn’t be my total damage but your total HP, instead! You’re an Archer, so your HP should be about the same as mine, a Mage; why is my HP only 47% of yours?”

“Sorry to break it to you but this Archer here has a full-Endurance build,” Xi Xiaotian stated dryly.

“Full Endurance?” Gu Fei was shocked, and then he realized, “That’s why your movement speed is so slow!”

“Yup. To think even my full-Endurance build couldn’t withstand your attack. Your Spell Damage is no joke, after all. But if I were a full-Endurance build Guardian or perhaps a Priest, I might survive your attack. Meaning, only you would have died just then,” Xi Xiaotian reasoned.

“Oi! The way you’re building your character and the trait of all your equipment... Are you intentionally trying to counter me?!” Gu Fei asked.

“Of course, I am. Wa ha ha ha! The top expert in Yunduan City fell to this unbeatable swindler’s hands in the end!” Xi Xiaotian chortled.

“Can you not have such a distasteful personality?” Xi Xiaotian’s tone reminded him of someone. He then hastily added, “Besides, I have yet to lose. Don’t forget that you got killed off as well, so we are even at most. Neither of us won or lost.”

“What? Are you dissatisfied?” Wanna give it another go?” Xi Xiaotian straightened herself and faced Gu Fei squarely.

“Let’s go!” Gu Fei brought out his sword as well.

“Are you for real? You’ll lose a level if you die now; aren’t you afraid of that happening?” Xi Xiaotian asked, skeptical.

“Swindler Tian, I’m sure you’ve realized it by now. Your chance of reflecting damage is only at 32%. It means that I have a 68% chance of emerging victorious and a 32% chance of dying together with you. As for you, you have zero chance of winning and 100% chance of dying...” Gu Fei reasoned.

“That’s perfectly fine by me! I was feeling that this sort of stat point allocation makes it hard for me to keep grinding, anyway. I’m ready to drop a level and reallocate my stat points when I level up again!” Xi Xiaotian said. “Come on; use your rich experience killing players to take me down!”

Gu Fei furrowed his brows for a moment before saying, “You don’t happen to have a vendetta with someone to the point of you using such method to get even, right?”

“No way... You managed to see through that?” Xi Xiaotian asked, shocked.

“You’re really despicable! If you wanna kill someone, just do

what I do!” Gu Fei flourished his blade before putting it inside his dimensional pocket.

“You’ve got your ways, and I’ve got mine!” Xi Xiaotian replied simply.

“I wish you all the best, then!” Gu Fei was ready to leave.

“Remember to use Appraisal before killing someone; careful you don’t get killed this same way again!” Xi Xiaotian giggled.

“Mhm-mhm...” Gu Fei nodded his head in agreement. “How many people out there would be as crazy as you to actually use such a method?” After saying this, he turned around and left in the direction of Ray’s Bar where the rest of Young Master's Elite was currently waiting for him.

“I’m sure there’s someone out there like that!” Xi Xiaotian muttered softly as she watched Gu Fei walk away.

Ray promptly spotted Gu Fei once he stepped inside the bar, mildly acknowledging his presence with a ‘congratulations’. Although Young Master’s Elite did not get the privilege of being proclaimed as the victors on the world channel by clinching a ‘perfect victory’, the system would still publicly announce the final results of the mercenary PvP tournament. First place was Young Master’s Elite, second place was The Black Hand, and third place was Water Flower.

The whole city was stunned by this outcome; no one had expected for the six-man mercenary group of Young Master's Elite to be such a dark horse that even the most famous and strongest mercenary group in Yunduan City got beaten by it.

Gu Fei sped past the bar lounge and heard the surrounding players discussing the matter in earnest. He felt quite pleased with himself for taking part in the match and earning all those kill points to secure this win. But when he entered the room, all this feeling of satisfaction vanished in thin air as he saw Young Master

Han's dissatisfied expression.

"Just what happened to you?! Why did you screw up at the very end?!" Young Master Han began yelling at Gu Fei before he could even take a seat. Young Master Han was naturally suppressing this yell, as the rooms that Ray had built were not soundproof.

"Calm down!" Royal God Call and War Without Wounds did their best to pacify Young Master Han, which Gu Fei found to be quite surprising. The two would usually watch such a show unfold with a touch of schadenfreude and would not do anything to resolve it; what they were doing right now was truly unlike them.

"How many times must we tell you; we gotta stay united," War Without Wounds sincerely said, fitting the mature look he had and making him appear more convincing.

"That's right, especially at times like this," Royal God Call said. When he saw that Gu Fei was about to say something, he quickly placed his finger on his lips and said, "Miles, just sit there and receive Young Master's tongue lashing."

"Yeah. Look Young Master; Miles knows that he's in the wrong, and he's behaving himself now. Old men like you should not act rashly. It doesn't matter if you hurt yourself bottling all that anger up; you just hafta be careful not to be too emotional. It's going to be extremely troublesome for us if you disband the mercenary group in a fit of anger," War Without Wounds said solemnly.

"None of us has received the final prize yet! You definitely cannot disband the group at this time," Royal God Call added.

Chapter 270 - Is there a need to go to such extent

The system would only give the rewards after the guild versus guild tournament ended, which created a chance for a mercenary group to disband before being awarded its dues. It turned out that this was what these two were really worried about! Young Master Han did not know whether to laugh or cry at this, and his anger died down as a result. He looked at Gu Fei and earnestly explained in a soft voice, “Do you know that because you failed to hold on to your life at the very end, we lost the chance of achieving ‘perfect victory’? Without it, we lost the privilege of having our victory specially announced on the world channel and thoroughly ruin our opponents. What b*llsh*t top guild of Yunduan City; I am the top guild of Yunduan City! No, wait. It’s the top guild in Parallel World! WA HA HA HA!” Young Master Han’s voice increased in volume the more he spoke until he was simply laughing maniacally at the end.

At which point Gu Fei got it, “Did he have too much to drink?”

Brother Assist nodded, “He drank quite a lot during the match as well...” Recalling his time on the mountain peak, his eyes almost got blinded by the scintillating glow of Young Master Han’s empty bottles.

“Is he really drunk? Why can’t I see that?” War Without Wounds expressed his doubt.

“He couldn’t even differentiate between a guild and a mercenary group, so how could he be sober? Are we a guild?” Gu Fei rebuked. Sometimes, idiocy really brought out the worst in people.

“Oh...” War Without Wounds hummed. Indeed, Young Master Han had just declared that he was Parallel World’s number one guild.

Sword Demon merely sighed deeply. Being a long-time friend of Young Master Han, he naturally knew that the latter had a little too much alcohol.

“Anyway, what exactly happened to you? How did you die?” Brother Assist asked Gu Fei the question that everyone was wondering about.

“It’s the ‘reflect damage’ trait,” Gu Fei simply replied.

“Oh...” everyone intoned. All of them naturally got it.

“Tragedy! What a tragedy!” Young Master Han suddenly began lecturing them, “Aren’t all of you peak experts in your respective fields? ‘Reflect damage’! How could none of you think of this trait that best counters high damage but low HP job classes; aren’t you guys ashamed of yourselves? Why did you guys not warn him about this beforehand?!”

“Well, why didn’t YOU?!” Royal God Call could not help but counter.

“I?” Young Master Han contemptuously gave him a sidelong glance, “Why would a pure person like me think of such a despicable thing?” Young Master Han’s reply was so narcissistic that no one present could stand it.

“I really have to hand it to you; you’re still a total narcissist even when you’re drunk. Sword Demon, when will he sober up?” Gu Fei asked Sword Demon.

Sword Demon paused for a moment before replying, “It’s about time now. He’s actually not that far gone, since he can still talk business and do what he is supposed to. He’s just a little more chatty than usual.”

Brother Assist returned to the topic at hand, “So far, I haven’t seen any equipment with the ‘reflect damage’ trait. How about you guys?”

All shook their heads.

“This type of equipment entirely depends on the proc rate and the degree of effect just like Fatal Blow. Someone will have to gather nearly a full-suit of equipment with the relevant trait to effectively use it. If either the chance or degree is low, the trait is pretty much ineffectual. Furthermore, the user will have to lower his or her defense stat to achieve a powerful degree of reflection, essentially putting the player in a very precarious state. Considering that there’s no potion or similar item that can recover HP during PvP in Parallel World at present, it can be said that no solo player out there could survive using such a build,” Brother Assist analyzed.

“Plus!” War Without Wounds added, “This sort of equipment is extremely silly. The user must have the enemy attack him to deal with the enemy. What if your enemy chooses not to fight you, instead? Truly, this is a one-time trick that can only be used when the opponent is unaware of it. Since everyone can use Appraisal in Parallel World, how can such equipment be useful when players make it a point to appraise the enemies before engaging?”

“Speaking of which, Miles doesn’t really know how to use Appraisal, yeah?” Royal God Call suddenly remembered this.

“Mmm... I’ve never really used it,” Gu Fei admitted. The Appraisal skill he had zealously trained for a while had pretty much been abandoned by him recently.

The experts in the room exchanged looks before shouting in unison, “That’s too d*mn dangerous!”

“That’s a bad habit you need to change!” War Without Wounds sincerely advised.

“That’s right! If your opponent knows of your bad habit, that person can intentionally create a whole suit of equipment that reflects damage just to f*ck you up!” Royal God Call quipped.

“Come to think of it; since that person could kill you with ‘reflect damage’, why did she only deal with you at the last moment?” War

Without Wounds voiced his astonishment.

“Miles know that woman, right? She probably did that as a favor to him!” Royal God Call was winking at him as he said this, “Which babe is it? Have I met her before?”

Gu Fei was unimpressed by his action and did not say a word in response. Brother Assist said, “If it’s a favor, why would she do that to Miles in this match?”

“Oh. Perhaps, she’s using this chance to experiment something with me? She did admit wanting to use that method to target someone else,” Gu Fei reasoned.

“Hmph!” Young Master Han audibly harrumphed, destroying their assumption that he had dozed off. His head remained buried in his arms as he said coolly, “Is there any other idiot out there who won’t use Appraisal in a PvP situation?”

“True!” War Without Wounds agreed, “Didn’t I just say that this method is far too passive that it can only be done when the target doesn’t know of it? Since Parallel World has the Appraisal skill, such equipment essentially has no value in PvP, so no one will use it for that.”

“That’s not true! If someone were to assign one or two of these people in a crowd, even if Gu Fei has the habit of using Appraisal, he wouldn’t be able to appraise every one of his targets before unleashing an AOE spell! Miles would be killed off by casting an AOE spell at that rate.” Royal God Call made quite a lot of sense when he gave this supposition.

“That’s not exactly right... ‘Reflect damage’ trait can only be triggered if it’s a melee attack of sorts!” War Without Wounds refuted.

“That actually depends on the design of the game itself!” Brother Assist argued.

“Yeah. I once played a game that has a system for ‘reflecting’

ranged attack,” Royal God Call shared.

“What about in Parallel World, then? Does this game have something like that or not?”

“Nope,” Brother Assist declared with certainty.

The two were suspicious. “Didn't you just say you've never seen the 'reflect damage' trait in any equipment before?”

Brother Assist did not know whether to laugh or cry at this question, “It's true that I haven't seen it, but I know about the design and effect of 'reflect damage' in Parallel World. 'Reflect damage' is certainly not applicable for ranged attacks here.”

“Oh. That explains why Miles has survived until this day,” Royal God Call said.

“He he... You gotta be careful in the future, Miles. Who knows which of your enemy knows about your bad habit of not using Appraisal and decides to assassinate you in that way?” War Without Wounds cautioned.

“No way! Could it be that this babe in today's match used this method to remind you of this?” Royal God Call gasped.

“Who would be considerate enough to go to such lengths?!” War Without Wounds also gasped. All turned their gazes on Gu Fei.

“D*mb*sses. If she wanted to remind him of this, she could just tell it to him straight. What's the point of going through all that trouble?” Young Master Han asked.

“Man, you're right!” War Without Wounds and Royal God Call nodded their heads in agreement.

“Unless...” Young Master Han was actually not done with his words.

“Unless what?” the two men quickly asked.

“Unless she's afraid that Miles won't believe her words,” Young Master Han continued.

“So this woman went through all this trouble just to make Miles believe her? Whoa! It’s far too amazing to be believable now!” War Without Wounds and Royal God Call shook their heads to deny this reasoning.

Gu Fei felt quite shocked. The youngster and middle-aged man continued to quarrel while Young Master Han would occasionally say his piece in his half-drunken state, more or less analyzing the situation in its entirety....

Could Swindler Tian really be trying to remind me of this thing? Now that he thought about it, Xi Xiaotian had actually reminded him to use his Appraisal skill more often earlier. Although she had said it mockingly, everything would have made perfect sense if Young Master Han’s deduction was correct.

However, War Without Wounds and Royal God Call’s input about this being too over-the-top made him hesitate. She would not be so bored to do that, right? Gu Fei preferred settling things upfront, so he immediately opened up his friends list to inquire about this hypothesis. Unfortunately for him, Xi Xiaotian was no longer online. It was already past 9 P.M. The guild versus guild tournament should currently be underway, which marked the official end of the mercenary PvP tournament.

The members of Ultimate Class 3 Guild sent him this message at this time: “Sir, which mercenary group are you in?”

“Young Master’s Elite; don’t you guys know that?”

“WOW! FIRST PLACE! SO POWERFUL!” all the students exclaimed.

“Sir, let us join your mercenary group!” someone requested.

“Shoo! What’s the point of joining such a messy mercenary group?!” Gu Fei chided. He looked at his fellow mercenaries; Young Master Han had a vile personality, was a complete narcissist, and an alcoholic; War Without Wounds’ action was too

inappropriate for his age while Royal God Call was too immature... The only common ground the two shared was how much of a pervert they were; Brother Assist was conscientious and careful, but he was always fretting about something or another. Gu Fei could not say whether he was Brother Assist or Brother Troubled; finally, there was Sword Demon. While he had an upright and reliable character, he was totally addicted to gaming. Therefore, he was not an ideal role model for his students.

They're truly a bunch of trash! Gu Fei sighed to himself. He tactfully neglected to examine himself, though; if he did, he would realize that his love for PvPing was far more troublesome to other players than the other five men's respective flaws! Any players with some PK points on them would even tremble in fear at the sight of him.

The six men stayed inside the room at Ray's Bar and waited for the guild versus guild tournament to end. The game officials had said before that the system would send out the prizes once the two tournaments ended. Still, none knew when that was exactly. All of them were beside themselves with excitement as they kept on guessing what the rewards would be.

Young Master Han eventually sobered up, while Royal God Call got drunk in his stead. A child like him had no decent tolerance for liquor, yet he ironically became well-behaved when drunk, snoring steadily at a corner of the room.

"Royal, you're far too negligent. To actually fall asleep at such a tense moment..." War Without Wounds snickered.

Time slowly went by until the system announcement rang. The guild versus guild tournament result was out. To no one's surprise, Traversing Four Seas came out on top. On second place was Armor Guild and on third place was The First Light Guild. Gu Fei had not heard of these two guilds before.

"The prize is coming!" War Without Wounds grabbed Gu Fei in

his excitement. The person he always bantered with was still fast asleep in the corner!

Chapter 271 - A Champion's Prize (I)

“Royal, we’re about to receive our prize. WAKE UP!” Gu Fei was naturally the most considerate among the members of Young Master’s Elite. Ignoring War Without Wounds who tried to stop him, he shook Royal God Call’s shoulder to wake him up.

“Huh? What – what’s going on?” Royal God Call was still out of it.

“We’re about to receive our prize; the guild versus guild tournament has just ended!” Gu Fei informed him.

“YAY!” Royal God Call perked up. Jumping to his feet, he cheered. All were beaming at him when Royal God Call’s face visibly paled. The festive mood he was feeling was replaced with horror as he stuttered, “Did... Did I just miss the finals for the guild versus guild tournament?”

The other five men’s expression also changed as they exchanged glances. Burying his face in his arms, only War Without Wounds was snickering at Royal God Call’s misfortune.

“I... I...” Royal God Call seemed to have currently lost his ability to form coherent words.

“We totally forgot about it...” Brother Assist apologetically said.

Sword Demon sighed deeply.

“You really should’ve kept it in mind!” Gu Fei mildly chastised. Royal God Call had been participating in both tournaments all along, so it should have become second nature for him to head over to the Main Hall of Guilds after the finals of the mercenary PvP tournament.

Young Master Han objectively analyzed the matter, “He hasn’t competed for the last three days. Plus, the prospect of obtaining a prize probably made him forget about it. Finally... He needs to get better at holding his liquor!”

“The rules state that a player who didn’t participate in the finals won’t receive a special prize, right?” Sword Demon whispered to Brother Assist, afraid of triggering Royal God Call by asking this aloud.

“Naturally. Why else would they arrange it to occur on a weekend?” Brother Assist whispered back.

Fear gripped Royal God Call as he stood still with his hands clenched.

Gu Fei kicked War Without Wounds, whose shoulders were shaking from laughter, “Since you remembered, why didn’t you remind him of it?! You’re too much!”

War Without Wounds lifted his head in surprise before raising his hands solemnly, “I swear to the heavens that I totally didn’t remember about it. I’m naturally very glad that I didn’t remember... Royal, I’m really happy for you!”

“F*ck!” all of them eyed this inconsiderate man disdainfully.

“Take a seat...” Brother Assist tugged the petrified Royal God Call back to his seat.

“Ah...” Sword Demon was at a loss; he happened to be sitting opposite of Royal God Call, and he was clearly not good at consoling others.

“Everybody, the prize allocation method is out!” Brother Assist cried out.

They excitedly read the system announcement; even Royal God Call seemed to have regained a bit of his energy.

The first to be announced was the mercenary PvP tournament prize allocation.

Six special rewards would be awarded for the third-place winner. The system would assign three out of the six items in accordance to the tabulated scores by directly depositing them into the

dimensional pockets of the respective players. The remaining three prizes would be mailed over to the mailbox by the Hall of Mercenaries, and the group leader could retrieve and give them out freely. Additional experience points and gold coins would be awarded individually.

Eight special rewards would be given for the second-place winner; four would be assigned and the other four would be mailed. Additional experience points and gold coins would be awarded individually.

Finally, ten special rewards would be given to the first-place winner; five would be assigned and the other five would be mailed. Additional experience points and gold coins would be awarded individually.

The system publicly announced all this. Prizes were the most enticing aspect in games; the game officials specifically made it public to ignite their players' passion toward Parallel World, so why would they announce it in private and to only the players involved?

The players in every in-game city were now aware of the prize allocation, with those in Yunduan City showing the most reaction to it.

Was there even a need to explain why? Every Yunduan City player knew that Young Master's Elite which had placed first in the mercenary PvP tournament had six members. This meant that each member of the group would obtain one item each and four would receive another extra. No other city had such miraculous winners; most winners were either level 5 or level 3 mercenary groups. They would have a minimum of sixty members at most, so splitting the prizes evenly was difficult even if they were at first place. Young Master's Elite absolutely lucked out in the prize-allocation department.

"F*ck! This is awesome!" War Without Wounds happily slapped

the table. He tried high-fiving someone, but the one beside him was Gu Fei while opposite him was Young Master Han. Both regarded him calmly, forcing War Without Wounds back to his seat.

At this moment, the system announced the prizes for the guild versus guild tournament. Since its scale was larger than the mercenary PvP tournament, it was largely seen as the highlight of Parallel World's event. The prizes provided for it was naturally far grander despite the prize distribution being a copy of the mercenary PvP tournament's prize allocation.

As expected, the allocation was indeed very similar.

Thirty special rewards would be given to the third-place winner. Fifteen would be assigned and the other fifteen would be mailed. Additional experience points and gold coins would be awarded individually.

Forty special rewards would be given to the second-place winner. The item assignment was split evenly as well. Additional experience points and gold coins would be awarded individually.

Lastly, fifty special rewards would be given to the first-place winner. The item assignment was split evenly as usual. Additional experience points and gold coins would be awarded individually. A guild quest would be awarded to the winning guild as well.

The additional quest was something that the first-place winner of the mercenary PvP tournament was not given. Just as the players were about to discuss this difference, the system notified them that fifteen minutes would be given for the guild members and mercenaries to tidy their dimensional pockets. Parallel World would not be responsible for any issues arising due to insufficient inventory slots, and players would be considered as voluntarily giving up their prizes if such issues occurred.

The members of the affected guilds and mercenary groups burst into activity after this announcement was made. With how

dimensional pockets worked in Parallel World, no matter how large the given item was, a player only needed to ensure that he or she had a free inventory slot to safely receive the prize. Most people naturally had a slot or two available. Some individuals fantasized about receiving all the prizes, so they hurriedly cleared out their inventories.

This fifteen-minute duration gave everyone ample time to discuss and speculate about this.

“I’ve not caught wind of the system assigning prizes in accordance to our performance!” Brother Assist expressed his surprise over this tidbit.

“I wonder what it will be based on... Kill points, perhaps?” War Without Wounds eyed Gu Fei with jealousy as he asked this.

“Logically speaking, that isn’t possible. It’s probably gonna be related to the skills used during the matches in consideration of each job class’s specialty. Only Mages would qualify for the big prizes if it were to be based off on kill points! After all, Mages are the most likely to secure kills in large-scale fights like these,” Brother Assist opined.

“Still, there’s no way Miles would win all the prizes alone!” War Without Wounds declared.

“There are six of us. Since five prizes are assigned, I wonder who is that ultimate loser who won’t get any item!” Gu Fei looked at Young Master Han and Brother Assist when he said this.

The loser would most likely be one of the two. The fights that Young Master's Elite had engaged in were always focused on guerilla tactics. This meant that these two players barely had a chance to shine. It was unlikely that the system would be intelligent enough to include Young Master Han’s commanding ability or Brother Assist’s information gathering in the score tabulation.

The two men looked at each other....

It was a really tense fifteen minutes for everyone involved. Things were not too bad for Young Master's Elite since the prize that they earned was enough to go around them. As for those players in the other mercenary groups and guilds, they were fervently praying to Buddha and zealously burning incense to their ancestors in hopes of the system looking fondly on them and blessing them with items. Although some of these people knew that they had barely contributed in the tournaments, they still had every right to fantasize about receiving special rewards.

At the exact end of fifteen minutes, the system publicly announced about sending out the prizes to the respective players simultaneously. Whether the people who had just logged in understood the system's meaning or not, feelings of envy and excitement still propagated among the players that had heard the previous announcement, especially those who were not going to receive any prizes. The only information that that had been withheld to the public was the names of the winners.

Inside the room at Ray's Bar, five players heard a dinging sound at the same time. None of them lost their composure when this happened; they did not anxiously check what they had received, either. Instead, they examined the others' expressions. War Without Wounds' expectant face utterly betrayed him to everyone.

The other five burst into laughter as they pointed at him, "Turns out you're the ultimate loser!"

"What?" War Without Wounds stood up abruptly, "Has the prizes already been sent out?"

As the others nodded their heads, he moaned in dismay, "F*ck! Why am I the loser?! Why must it be me?!"

Brother Assist, the King of Information, began analyzing this based on statistics and data, "You didn't actually bag many kills throughout the tournament, yeah? You are also lacking in terms

time spent in the matches, death count, and so on....”

War Without Wounds was speechless when he heard this. Indeed, he barely had any kills throughout the tournament, and he often died first before everyone else in the group.

“Forget it. Since you didn’t get an item, one of the five freely assigned items for this group shall be yours,” Young Master Han said.

“Doesn’t that mean I won’t have the chance to acquire two?” War Without Wounds asked.

All of them looked at him and spat one word, “Shameless!”

“Come. Let’s see what each of us got!” The other five took out the item rewards from their dimensional pockets, whistling in awe in the process.

“The system sure is considerate. The prizes were given depending on our job classes!” Brother Assist exclaimed.

Young Master Han got a holy staff for Priest.

[Angelic Deceit
+ 10 Intelligence
+ 10 Spirit
+ 10 Endurance
+20% Heal Enhancement
Special skill: Phantasmic Lifeforce. Instantly fills the target’s HP to full, disappearing once the skill duration expires
Skill duration: 30 seconds
Skill cooldown: 2 minutes]

As everyone looked at the staff, Brother Assist immediately said, “This skill is so... sinister...”

He then showed off his item reward to everyone, “Take a look at mine!”

[Twilight Blade

- + 10 Strength
- + 10 Agility
- + 10 Endurance
- + 20% attack Enhancement
- + 10% chance of inflicting the Weaken effect]

“This...” The others looked at Brother Assist. “Did you advance your job class to a Dark Knight?”

Brother Assist nodded his head in confirmation, saying, “The high-level skills of a Holy Knight specialize in party-wide buffing and such. I feel that our mercenary group doesn’t really need that sort of skill.”

“You should’ve just chosen whatever you wished to play with; no need to think about this group,” Young Master Han chastised.

“Well... The sight of you guys having fun killing made me somewhat envious!” Brother Assist smiled.

“Assist has finally woken up!” Gu Fei felt pleased. He had never truly understood where Brother Assist was finding the joy in playing Parallel World all this while.

Brother Assist laughed as he glanced at Royal God Call, “What did you get?”

The item reward seemed to have failed to mitigate Royal God Call’s sadness for missing the guild versus guild tournament as he still had an awkward expression when he took the item out of his dimensional pocket. Suddenly, the room was illuminated by two bright lights.

Everyone showed an astonished expression, “What did you just take out?”

Royal God Call was equally shocked by the sudden glow. Did he miss a finer detail that made his equipment emit godly lights? As he was about to closely inspect the item, Sword Demon apologetically said, “Sorry about that. Wounds and I just leveled

up.”

“Ah?! Oh... Did they award the gold coins and EXP already?” The others hurriedly checked their money pouches and experience point bars, realizing that they received quite an increase. Sword Demon and War Without Wounds accumulated a lot of experience points, so their experience point rewards allowed them to rise to level 41.

Since the six men all received these rewards, they were not that surprised by them. All turned their gazes on the item Royal God Call had placed on the table.

[Point of Ephemera
+ 10 Agility
+ 10 Strength
+ 5 attack range
+ 35% attack Enhancement
+ 10% chance of inflicting the Pierce effect]

“This...” Brother Assist, along with the rest, was silent for a moment before saying, “You can’t really tell if it’s better than Sniper’s Scream or worse!”

“Yup!” Royal God Call could also not decide which was better between his two weapons. Sniper’s Scream increased Agility by 20 points, Attack Range by 10 points, and Fatal Blow by 15% with 30% Snipe enhancement. While Point of Ephemera was the better choice in terms of basic attacks due to its ‘35% Attack Enhancement’ trait, Sniper’s Scream could greatly enhance the Attack Power of Royal God Call’s ultimate skill, Snipe.

“Just swap it when the need arrives. There’s no such thing as perfect equipment, anyway,” Brother Assist told Royal God Call after comparing the two items on the table.

Royal God Call could only nod his head as their gazes shifted onto Sword Demon.

“Fortunately, the prize I got isn’t a weapon!” Sword Demon expressed his relief as he took out something from his dimensional pocket. He already had the two overleveled daggers, Lasting Sentence and Dying Breath, which were also set equipment. The system would certainly give out items according to the current level 40 standard, so it would have been a waste if Sword Demon had gotten a weapon. Sword Demon placed a piece of bandana on the table, yet it was different from the pieces of cloth Gu Fei and the rest used to cover their faces as it had stats.

[Assassin’s Bandana
+ 10 Agility
+ 10 Strength
+ 10% defense Enhancement
+ 20% Stealth Enhancement]

“That name is so plain!” everyone exclaimed.

“Stealth enhancement... So Stealth could be enhanced, huh!” Royal God Call muttered.

“It’s probably because no equipment has skill for detecting Stealth yet, so there isn’t an urgent need to enhance Stealth at the moment!” Sword Demon glanced over to Gu Fei. Although the latter told him that he did not depend on equipment or skill to detect Stealth, Sword Demon could still not help but be curious if Stealth enhancement would be effective against Gu Fei.

It was Gu Fei’s turn to show them what he got. Fishing out an item from his dimensional pocket, he casually dropped it on the table, “It’s this accessory.” His item reward was a ring.

[Ring of Subdued Lightning
+ 12% chance of triggering additional lightning attack
+ 12% lightning resistance]

Different types of equipment had different criteria to judge their grades. Accessories and similar items were different from weapons when it came to the amount of traits. Ring of Subdued Lightning

for instance was purple-tier equipment despite it only having two traits.

The system judged the equipment's value rather differently from players because it never considered trait application. Take Gu Fei's Ring of Subdued Lightning as an example; while it giving such an item to the Lightning Mage Gu Fei was apt, its 'additional lightning attack' trait was something the average Mage would be unable to utilize. As for the 'lightning resistance' trait... A majority of Mages had chosen the job class with Water Affinity, so equipment related to the Water Affinity would be more valuable to them. Lightning Affinity equipment was therefore not really in demand and highly valued.

No matter how exceptional the traits were, top-grade equipment with 'useless' traits was still considered as faux top-grade equipment.

Parallel World's system did not distinguish between true top-grade and faux top-grade equipment like players did. The ring's two traits had high value, so the system evaluated it highly to the point that the A.I. considered it as the most fitting item reward for Gu Fei. From its perspective, this ring could even be valued higher than Sword Demon, Royal God Call and the others' item rewards. Fortunately, Gu Fei was a faux Mage; if he were like the other Mages, he would probably be cursing Parallel World for awarding him such an item right about now.

No matter how the system or players judged the items they had received, everyone in Young Master's Elite unanimously agreed that Young Master Han's holy staff with a skill was the most outstanding item reward thus far. If the system had gifted the players based on the number of kills and ilk, the best equipment would have never fallen in the hands of Young Master Han. After all, Gu Fei had the best performance in the tournament out of them all.

Everyone pondered on this issue for a long time. In the end,

Brother Assist came up with a logical answer, “I GOT IT! Only Young Master has perfect attendance throughout the tournament.”

“Perfect attendance?” Everyone thought back to the first match of the mercenary PvP tournament. On the first day of Parallel World’s PvP event, the square by the Hall of Mercenaries had been thoroughly filled with players that only Young Master Han and Gu Fei had decisively participated in the first match against only one opponent.

As for Gu Fei, he had missed a match when he had gotten waylaid by Cloud Herder Guild. Indeed, only Young Master Han had participated in all the matches of the mercenary PvP tournament.

Just like how not turning up for work was the biggest mistake one could make when working, the system also handed harsh punishment for players who failed to participate in all the PvP event’s matches. Although Young Master Han had not earned his group kill points, the system had still judged him as the role model of his mercenary group and had thus assigned him the greatest item reward.

“Heh... I’m truly wonderful,” Young Master Han boasted.

The others did not know what to say and could only blame themselves for letting this narcissistic person obtain the greatest prize out there.

“Alright. Let’s get the freely assigned prizes we’ve earned!” War Without Wounds felt thoroughly envious as he watched everyone pull out top-grade equipment one after another and deemed it to be his turn to get an item reward!

Chapter 272 - A Champion's Prize (II)

The six men of Young Master's Elite left the room at Ray's Bar together. Plenty of patrons outside were animatedly discussing about the end of Parallel World's PvP event. The highlight of these players' conversation was of course how envious they were of the six members of Young Master's Elite earning themselves ten item rewards. The six men were naturally happy to hear the other players talk about them, yet none of them showed this on their faces as they made their way through the crowd and out of the bar.

The unassigned item rewards could only be retrieved from the mailbox outside the Hall of Mercenaries. Currently, the square by the Hall of Mercenaries was quite crowded due to the players of The Black Hand and Water Flower being present. Since the item rewards were unassigned, internal conflicts due to incorrect distribution of them could easily arise. Thus, all the members of the respective mercenary groups were present in the venue. By announcing the item rewards that they had gotten, all could openly discuss on who deserved which item. This was the guild and group leaders' way of appeasing everyone and preventing any fighting over the final decision.

As for Young Master's Elite, only one of its members had yet to obtain an item reward from the system, so they were not anxious about the unassigned item rewards unlike the players of the other mercenary groups.

When The Black Hand's players spotted the six men, they felt rather helpless on how to act on their anger toward Young Master's Elite. Since they cleanly lost the finals to the six men, they would simply be sullyng their good name and seem like sore losers if they retaliated so openly. It would be more appropriate to do something like that away from the public's watchful gazes, if they indeed wished to retaliate in that manner. The positive opinion of the public about The Black Hand would likely drop if its

players openly challenged Young Master's Elite, yet they saw no harm in engaging in some cheeky banter with the six men.

Brave Surge and Black Index Finger came forward at the same time to receive the six men who were approaching the mailbox. The Priest Monologue under the Moon even accompanied Black Index Finger in greeting them.

“Congratulations!” both leaders expressed.

“Same to you!” Young Master Han replied.

Brave Surge was naturally pleased by his reply as his group indeed got third place, allowing him to qualify for the special rewards. Black Index Finger, for his part, was not very pleased with Young Master Han's response as it sounded as if the latter was taunting him. Nevertheless, his face only showed a beaming countenance. Black Index Finger did not beat around the bush; sweeping his gaze over to the rest of Young Master's Elite, he asked, “I wonder who slipped up in that final moment.”

M*th*rf*ck*r! Gu Fei cursed internally. Unfortunately, the sidelong glances of everyone in Young Master's Elite completely gave him away as the careless person who had cost his group its ‘perfect victory’.

Black Index Finger felt absolutely mollified upon learning of this fact. In fact, all The Black Hand's members cheered as if they had won first place when they learned of this.

No more words were exchanged after this, as everyone had important business to attend to. The two mercenary groups took the item rewards from the mailbox and pitifully did their best to fairly distribute them. The six men of Young Master's Elite entered the Hall of Mercenaries to retrieve the five item rewards while talking with one another. Someone among them was still bound to not receive an item reward, so they had to do this as harmoniously as possible.

“Wounds did not get an item reward, so he should get one right now,” Young Master Han said.

As War Without Wounds gratefully lowered his head, the rest expressed their agreement to this, “Sure!”

“Alright, that’s it for you. Don’t even think of asking for a second item!” Young Master Han coldly remarked as War Without Wounds adopted a pleading expression.

“Scram! You shameless bum!” the rest of them reprimanded him.

Young Master Han swept his gaze on the other five men before settling at Gu Fei, “Miles contributed the most, yet the item reward he got was just a faux top-grade ring. I propose he get first pick!”

They were also in agreement to this amid War Without Wounds’ muttering of: “What about me? Don’t I get to choose?”

“Scram! You shameless bum!” they scolded him once more.

“We’re already pitying you by gifting you an item, yet you dare ask to choose?!” Royal God Call eyed War Without Wounds contemptuously.

War Without Wounds was aggrieved! He was the number one Warrior in many MMOs, yet he did not even have a foot to stand on in Young Master’s Elite. Still, he agreed with Royal God Call’s words and could only chalk everything up to bad luck for failing to get an item reward due to the system’s way of tabulating the players’ scores. If the unassigned items were to be distributed according to their individual contributions, the three nimble players who had done most of the killings should be given priority, while the remaining two items should be handed to the one that did the commanding and another that collected information; War Without Wounds had simply not done enough compared to the other five. This would also be apparent from Sword Demon’s recording of the contribution points of their mercenary group.

War Without Wounds dared not comment further as he checked

the five items Young Master Han had retrieved from the mailbox.

Before anyone could properly look at the items, Young Master Han shoved an item to Gu Fei, “No picking. Take this and leave.”

“What?” Gu Fei felt confused over Young Master Han’s sudden change of mind as he received the item. It was a permanent skill scroll for Lighting Affinity, Palm of Thunder.

“Oh!” comprehension dawned on everyone. Only Gu Fei could use such an item, and it would virtually be useless for the other five!

This little episode made everyone realize that assigning the item rewards was a simple task. The six of them had different job classes, so they would just take the most appropriate items for them.

Even War Without Wounds felt anxious. He would have to accept any of the remaining four items if it happened to be suitable for a Warrior, right?!

All were almost driven mad by Young Master Han’s unhurried announcement of the items’ details, though. “Can’t you g*dd*mn be any faster?!” everyone bellowed.

“Ha ha ha ha!” Young Master Han laughed heartily at the anxious expression of everyone.

He is so evil... was what the other five were thinking to themselves. Young Master Han’s hands sped up and pushed the remaining four items to four different people to finish the process.

“Turns out that discussing about this is unnecessary as it can easily be settled by giving the items to those who can use them,” Young Master Han languidly said. The other five men each received an item; meaning, Young Master Han was the one that did not get an item reward this time around.

“This... This...” Everyone felt a little awkward. Technically, Young Master Han had contributed a lot to get them through the

entire mercenary PvP tournament. Had it not been for him, Young Master's Elite might have been eliminated on their way to the finals.

“Given my flawless commanding skill, it would be too much if I were to take all the item rewards for myself. It just so happened that these five items are usable by your garbage job classes,” Young Master Han remarked.

Garbage job classes... What the heck! The awkwardness that they were feeling toward Young Master Han disappeared with his callous comment, and they just looked on their item rewards, instead.

The unassigned item rewards were thus smoothly divided among them based on their job classes, and there did not appear to be any item among the rewards similar to the faux top-grade ring that Gu Fei had gotten. The system was rather accommodating, after all; having item rewards that were only ideal for certain job classes helped players avoid possible disputes. No matter how much a Mage contributed to a fight, he or she would not be shameless enough to hold on to a Priest's skill scroll, right?

Besides Gu Fei's Palm of Thunder, Sword Demon got himself a thief cape.

[Nightstalker's Cloak
+ 10 Agility
+ 10 Strength
+ 10% chance of entering Stealth when attacked
Effect: HP will automatically recover while in Stealth mode.]

Brother Assist got himself a permanent skill scroll called Spiteful Slash. It was a Dark Knight skill that dealt 1.5 times his basic attack upon use and had a chance of inflicting the Wound status effect.

War Without Wounds also got himself a permanent skill scroll called Frenzy. It was a Berserker skill that caused the user to enter the Frenzy state. The damage of attacks was amplified by 1.5 while

in this state. However, defense dropped by 50% for thirty seconds.

Only Royal God Call was in tears, as he once more got a bow. “F*CK YOU, SYSTEM!” He cursed vehemently. He was about to throw the bow to the ground when everyone stopped him. “Let’s take a look first!” everyone consoled.

[Repeater Bow
+ 10 Agility
+ 10 Strength
+ 10% attack enhancement
+ 30% attack speed
+ 30% Double Shot enhancement]

“This... Uhm... It’s not bad. Each of the bows has its merits...” everyone mumbled a few words of comfort to Royal God Call.

“Royal, you can now hang three different bows on your back! With you using each based on the situation, you’ll be like a professional Archer!” War Without Wounds roared with laughter.

Out of all the ten items their mercenary group had received, Young Master Han’s Angelic Deceit was still the most valuable. Although the usefulness of its skill was how people judged an item’s value, the strange Phantasmic Lifeforce skill would have to be tested on the field first to truly evaluate its worth.

Similarly, War Without Wounds, Gu Fei, and Brother Assist each got a skill scroll that would need to be tested to judge the skill’s worth. In comparison, the value of Sword Demon’s Nightstalker’s Cape was already obvious with its ability to recover HP while in Stealth mode... Although it was not stated how much HP it could recover, that line of words alone was tempting enough.

Despite all this, these experts felt rather disappointed with their haul. The others were hoping to obtain overleveled equipment for themselves after seeing Gu Fei’s Moonlit Nightfalls and Sword Demon’s recently acquired Lasting Sentence Dying Breath. Evidently, the system was not generous enough to reward them

with such OP equipment.

Gu Fei had to stay online until the end of the guild versus guild tournament just to wait for their prize released. This was far later than his usual log-off time, so Gu Fei immediately bade the others farewell once they exited the Hall of Mercenaries to go offline.

Brother Assist and War Without Wounds left together to test out their new skills, while Sword Demon headed to a grinding map to test his new cloak on monsters. Young Master Han glanced briefly at his dimensional pocket before heading toward the nearest tavern to replenish his fuel. Royal God Call stood on one spot for a while as he forlornly held on to his three bows.

The forums that night were aglow with activities. Players from the various in-game cities discussed about the huge rewards that that had been sent out for the event; each of them was green with envy. The average player already had difficulties obtaining top-grade equipment, so not many of them would even think that an OP weapon like Moonlit Nightfalls existed.

The officials capitalized on the PvP event's thrilling matches to advertise Parallel World everywhere. Players knew beforehand that they would be filmed and photographed in the tournaments for the game company's promotions, but the post-production team cleverly blurred the players' faces and replaced them with generic faces before broadcasting the short video clips.

All the videos featured amazing players. This was especially true of the exceptional Mage hailing from Yunduan City, which ranked high in terms of view counts. That black-clothed Mage left many viewers breathless with how he utilized Twin Incineration using a sword. They even got goosebumps on their skin when they realized that the Mage could still dish out high Spell Damage despite obviously concentrating his points to Agility judging from his exquisite moves. Quite a lot of people questioned the footage's authenticity, thinking that the game company had intentionally created it for advertisement purposes, but this theory was soon

debunked by players from Yunduan City who vouched for the video's authenticity. The Mage depicted was indeed the real deal, and that same person had reputedly reduced a Thief by eight levels, gaining himself the 'Close Combat Mage' moniker.

“So that Mage is still as indomitable as before...” Those who still remembered that incident during the open beta days were awestruck by this revelation.

Chapter 273 - The Grand Meeting of Yunduan City's Mercenaries

Ye Xiaowu was unhappy over the game company's use of Gu Fei's footage to promote Parallel World, but since this was under the Marketing Department's jurisdiction, which he was not in charge of, he did not have much say about the matter. Whereas Ye Xiaowu felt uneasy over the video's tremendous popularity, which was evident from its high ranking, the Marketing Department employees were beside themselves with joy, treating the video's hype as them making the right choice as far as candidates went.

Gu Fei's popularity essentially surged overnight, and many people outside Yunduan City were now eagerly inquiring about him to those residing in Yunduan City. Although the players in the city had nothing worthwhile to mention, that did not stop them from talking. This was even more so for those who felt it their responsibility to brag about Gu Fei just because they hailed from the same city as him.

"Oh! You know that Mage?"

"Of course! We even shared a drink last night."

"Really? What's his name?"

"Oh, well... That - That's a little inconvenient to reveal...."

Most of the braggarts would feel stumped when this question was asked. Although the 'Thousand Miles Drunk' IGN was revealed, it was not to the point where the name was known throughout the streets. Nonetheless, due to the hype that the system had created, some players learned that they needed to brush up on their information regarding the Mage before promoting his IGN.

Besides this, the strength of the mercenary groups and guilds in various cities was reshuffled after Parallel World's PvP event. Take Yunduan City as an example; Traversing Four Seas' smooth

journey to the finals cemented their position as the number one guild in the city. Beyond the rewards that the guild had received, the experience points its members had earned were a huge win for them.

For instance, level 41 was no longer something only the Five Unyielding Experts could attain. The guilds and mercenary groups that were in the tournaments' top three spots had members that managed to ascend level 41 through the experience points that they had received. As for the original level 41 players, Drifting, Southern Lone Blade, Eternal Dominion, and Deep Waters remained where they were.

This clearly showed the difference in experience points earned by each of the Five Unyielding Experts. The top position across all job classes' leaderboards had already been occupied by Svelte Dancer when she got to level 42 while the tournaments were still underway. Although she did not earn any reward from the mercenary PvP and guild versus guild tournaments, she still managed to stand at the peak, showing once more just how formidable a pay-to-win player could be.

The debate about whether Carouse should be the number one guild in Yunduan City instead of Traversing Four Seas was more or less settled by the experience points and fifty item rewards that Traversing Four Seas got for coming first in the guild versus guild tournament. Armor Guild on second place and The First Light on third place also greatly profited from the rewards that they had received; were it not for them being level 4 guilds with a two-hundred-fifty member difference to Carouse, both guilds might even surpass Carouse after such a wondrous haul.

On the mercenary groups' side, Young Master's Elite remained as a six-man group. People found it inconceivable for it to be the top mercenary group despite Young Master's Elite ranking first in the mercenary PvP tournament. Still, people would now never judge the strength of a mercenary group based on its number of

members. The advantage mercenary groups could obtain from being in different levels was simply insignificant. If even a six-man group could defeat a hundred-man group, then this simply meant that the difference between an eighty-man mercenary group at level 4 and a one-hundred-man mercenary group at level 5 was difficult to discern through numbers alone. Thus, the top position for mercenary group was still being fiercely competed over in Yunduan City.

With the identities of Young Master's Elite's members exposed, just hearing their IGNs could frighten anyone. When these six players logged on, they found countless invitations sent into their mailboxes. Besides Gu Fei, the other five were quickly reminded of their past glories. Although they turned a blind eye to these invites, they still felt a sense of contentment for being highly regarded by others.

Gu Fei received more letters than the rest of them every day. His newly acquired celebrity status was of course generated by the popular video of his mercenary PvP tournament's performance. Gu Fei did not have the habit of checking the official forums, but once he heard about this matter from Brother Assist and the rest, he promptly checked the video, claiming loudly about how the footage was falsified. The reason for this stemmed from how the footage underwent heavy editing and only showed those instances where Gu Fei insta-killed his targets. His weaknesses, such as his low mana that required him to frequently consume fruit and the scenes where he had to awkwardly grind the enemies' HP, were summarily edited out in the final product. In short, Gu Fei's prowess was greatly magnified while his weaknesses were not even shown. Who would have expected the game company to be so considerate toward Gu Fei in this way?

At any rate, many people now wished to meet Gu Fei after seeing the video. Even players beyond Yunduan City's borders sent their regards to him. He could do nothing about all this and could only

do what his fellow mercenaries did: thoroughly ignore the mails. However, in just a few days, Gu Fei's mailbox reached its limit of one thousand letters. From then onward, Gu Fei would be greeted with the system message [Your mailbox is full. Please read the letters as soon as possible.] instead of the usual [You have a new mail. Please take note to read them.] whenever he logged on. One thousand letters... Gu Fei did not even dare to read through each of them.

When he got online today, he promptly received Young Master Han's message urging him to immediately head over to Ray's Bar. Maybe it's new business again... Gu Fei thought to himself as he rushed down the streets.

Young Master Han had once bragged about their business booming once they made a name for their mercenary group through Parallel World's PvP event. True to his words, Young Master Han no longer needed to specifically visit the Hall of Mercenaries to acquire missions as players came to him in droves to ask for help in their quests, allowing Young Master's Elite to pick the missions they wished to complete and greatly improving the six members' days.

When Gu Fei arrived at Ray's Bar and pushed its door open, he was stunned by what he saw. Plenty of familiar faces were inside the bar, and they were all important figures in Yunduan City. Foeherder, who was sitting by a table beside the door, was the first person Gu Fei spotted; his face wore a complex expression.

Walking in, he saw Carouse Guild Leader Brave Surge and his brothers-in-arms. When he neared their table, Brave Surge got up and exchanged pleasantries with him.

Walking a bit further inside, he saw Black Index Finger, Drifting, and several other members of The Black Hand. Black Index Finger's face blanched when he also saw Gu Fei. Drifting, for his part, greeted Gu Fei warmly and asked him about the rewards he had gotten from the tournament.

Gu Fei beamingly lifted his middle finger to him, causing Drifting to be momentarily stunned. Gu Fei quickly realized what he had unintentionally done and used his other hand to indicate the ring on his finger, “This item right here.”

Drifting immediately understood and chuckled, “That’s the one?”

“Mhm-mhm! There’s something else, too. I’ll show it to you when the opportunity arises,” Gu Fei laughed.

Leaving the table on that note and a few steps forward, he felt a tug on his sleeves. Gu Fei looked down and saw Sakurazaka Moony, Fireball, and a few others of Forever in Flowers creepily huddling on the table. Fireball whispered to Gu Fei, “Drunk bro! Drunk bro!”

“So you guys are here, too. What’s up?” Gu Fei bent his body to speak to them.

“Help introduce us!” The men shiftily pointed toward the table beside them.

Gu Fei turned to look and saw Svelte Dancer, Luo Luo, July, June’s Rain... The whole table was occupied by the Amethyst Rebirth ladies. Gu Fei beamed at them. But before he could greet them, Svelte Dancer glared at him, “When are you paying up?!”

Gu Fei lowered his head in embarrassment. He hastily took a coin pouch from his dimensional pocket and tossed it over to her. Surprised, Svelte Dancer grabbed it from the air. However, she growled when she saw its meager content, “Why is it only 300 gold coins?!”

“Didn’t I say that I’ll pay you back in installment?” Gu Fei asked rhetorically. That sum was all he had managed to save from every match in the tournament, inclusive of the final prize money he received for his win and the coins he earned from doing missions.

“Introduce us!” Sakurazaka Moony and Fireball pleaded

earnestly. Seeing how near they were to the girls, Gu Fei reckoned Sakurazaka Moony and his gang must have done their best to occupy a table as close as possible to the ladies. Gu Fei felt helpless; he was just about to help fulfill their plea when Svelte Dancer spat out, “What are you sneakily muttering about with the skeevy wretches of Forever in Flowers?”

Gu Fei turned to Sakurazaka Moony and shrugged his shoulders, “I don’t think there’s a need for introduction; they clearly recognize you guys.”

The men were very elated. Although she called them ‘skeevy wretches’, they were still glad that these babes had a deep impression of them.

“Didn’t you say you only have eyes for ‘the most outstanding tree’ in the forest?” Gu Fei asked Sakurazaka Moony.

Sakurazaka Moony did not miss a beat as he cast a sidelong glance over to Fireball and his guildmates, “It’s for them.”

Gu Fei chuckled, “What about you?”

Sakurazaka Moony shook his head forlornly, “Troublesome.”

“What?” Gu Fei asked, puzzled.

Sakurazaka Moony scratched his head and shared, “We originally came here together. But once we entered, she suddenly turned around and left.”

“Oh?” Gu Fei expressed his surprise. What he was surprised about was not Vast Lushness’s sudden departure but her willingness to mix with Sakurazaka Moony and his lot. As for why she had left, Gu Fei quickly found the cause of it with a quick glance around the room. Silver Moon was staring at him with steely eyes, but when Gu Fei looked at him as well, he hurriedly averted his gaze. Silver Moon seemed as if he wanted to vanish from sight.

Gu Fei was unfazed by this. Had he met him on the street, Gu Fei

might have let Silver Moon have a taste of his sword. The veneer of politeness shared between Young Master's Elite and Silver Moon had long since peeled off. Since Gu Fei felt that a monumental reason was behind this gathering of Yunduan City's many prominent figures at Ray's Bar, he settled himself with staring the man down as he walked toward the opposite direction.

Young Master Han and the rest of Young Master's Elite were occupying a table in the lounge. The mere fact that the five were not sitting inside their usual room already hinted to something afoot. They had already reserved a seat for Gu Fei, teasing him the moment he sat down, "Heh... It sure is different when one is famous."

Gu Fei was greeted by many players the moment he entered the bar. Be it in hatred or love, not one person present took his or her eyes off of him.

"What's going on?" Gu Fei ignored their teasing and directly asked the question he had in mind.

Since it was related to gathering information, Brother Assist was naturally the one who answered him, "Traversing Four Seas has invited everyone here today."

"Everyone?"

"Yup. All the top mercenary groups in Yunduan City are here right now."

"Oh..." Gu Fei swept his gaze over. Indeed, every table had a prominent leader seated. While he did not recognize some of them, Gu Fei could tell from their aura that they were no average players.

"What for?" Gu Fei asked.

"Heard it has something to do with the quest Traversing Four Seas received for placing first in the guild versus guild tournament," Brother Assist replied.

"Royal, don't you know anything about this?" Gu Fei asked Royal

God Call.

As Royal God Call shook his head, War Without Wounds said while patting his head, “Looks like you’ve already been ostracized.”

Chapter 274 - Bodyguard Mission

Ray's Bar was currently filled with Yunduan City's top mercenary groups. While many mercenary groups had hidden their strengths before, the mercenary PvP tournament had essentially unearthed them. Whatever the outcome of the matches was, the hidden experts and unique specializations of the various mercenary groups were revealed throughout the tournament.

Using the various mercenary groups here as examples... Nothing was naturally needed to be said about Young Master's Elite. As for Silver Moon, he was here due to his King's Command. Any skill that could provide a party-wide buff was considered valuable, especially since only higher level Holy Knights had access to such skills. Silver Moon's possession of one such skill qualified him as a man ahead of the curve, highly demanded by large guilds alike.

The Amethyst mercenary group might not have much strength, yet the existence of the pay-to-win player Svelte Dancer in their midst immediately qualified them for an invite. Gu Fei only found out now that Sakurazaka Moony and his mercenary group was named 'The Great Hunters' for specializing in setting up traps. All sorts of mercenary groups that had specializations were invited by Traversing Four Seas to Ray's Bar without providing any reason. Given that none of Traversing Four Seas had appeared yet, the people present were virtually in the dark for what this was all about.

Fortunately, they did not have to wait too long. After more mercenary groups entered the bar, Oathless Sword, Youthful Reflection, and Gale Force finally arrived.

As the winner of the guild versus guild tournament, Traversing Four Seas was now undoubtedly the top guild of Yunduan City. Guild Leader Oathless Sword was positively radiant as he swaggered into Ray's Bar with an air befitting that of a champion. Foe-herder, Brave Surge, and several other mercenary group

leaders were also guild leaders of their respective guilds, having been vying for the top spot ever since their guilds' establishment. Now that Traversing Four Seas officially occupied the top spot, Oathless Sword could not help but express this to those present.

“Ha ha! It's been a while, Old Cloud!” “Surge, hope you've been well lately!”

Oathless Sword's showy greeting caused the people inside the bar to furrow their brows. They regarded pompous fellows like him in relative disdain and felt sorry for the whole of Yunduan City that it had such a man leading the number one guild.

Oathless Sword continued greeting the other mercenaries present. His attitude became visibly subdued when talking with the Amethyst ladies, which made everyone present feel like throwing up. The best was usually saved for the last; Oathless Sword greeted everyone first before heading to the table Young Master's Elite was occupying. He courteously and solemnly greeted each of them, including his guild member Royal God Call – something he had not done for any other groups.

Gu Fei was actually the one he greeted last. Oathless Sword pulled Gu Fei's hand close to his as he addressed the latter with kind words. Youthful Reflection and Gale Force who were beside Oathless Sword all this while showed discomfort for his action; one appeared to be infuriated, while another seemed to be in shock. Finally, Oathless Sword emphatically said to Gu Fei: “I'm so pleased that you managed to call attention to our Yunduan City!”

The people inside the bar could no longer stand it, and someone actually stood up and slapped the table to call him out for it, “Oathless, you m*th*r*f*ck*r! Quickly tell us what's all this about and stop groveling there like a sycophant! Just look at yourself!”

Releasing Gu Fei's hand, Oathless Sword turned to address the person shouting at him, “A ha ha ha! Alright! Let's get down to business!”

“That woman is so straightforward! Who is she?” Gu Fei asked, shocked. Even if the bar had fewer patrons, her blunt words were still disrespectful, yet she just went ahead and said them without holding back!

Brother Assist promptly offered information about her to Gu Fei, “She’s the leader of Rainbow betwixt the Clouds mercenary group that placed fourth in the tournament, Gu Xiaoshang. She’s also the level 3 Colored Clouds Guild’s leader. Before Svelte Dancer arrived in Yunduan City, she’s regarded as the strongest woman around. I heard Oathless Sword has been pursuing her for the longest time!”

“Whoa! Oathless Sword’s taste sure is unique!” War Without Wounds and Royal God Call exclaimed in unison.

Gu Xiaoshang’s looks were definitely above average, yet she was too much of a firebrand that anyone could mistake her for a man. She was different from June’s Rain, though. June’s Rain had not cared about her appearance back then, so her shabby equipment and gender-neutral voice had made Gu Fei mistake her for a man. After equipping the body-fitting armor she had acquired from Yueye City, no one mistook her again for a male player.

As for Gu Xiaoshang, the issue about her was her temperament. Although people knew that she was a woman, they still felt some resistance inside, “Whoa! That lady is quite vulgar....”

However, her vulgar shout was what put a stop to Oathless Sword’s ridiculousness. He walked over to the center of the bar and cleared his throat, “The ladies and gentlemen present here are all skilled mercenaries of this city. I’ve summoned all of you here tonight to offer you to join hands with me for accomplishing a quest I have.”

The entire bar burst into activity once he said this. Since all those present were part of mercenary groups, they were naturally knowledgeable regarding the different quests Parallel World offered. Although most mercenary groups had dozens of players,

not one of the current quests required more than ten players to complete them.

Since Traversing Four Seas had to hire mercenaries for this particular quest, it proved that the quest was not a regular type that players could complete on their own. As a guild with over seven hundred fifty members at its disposal, was there even any issue that their numbers could not deal with? Hence, everyone was wondering about the difficulty of this system-given quest for Traversing Four Seas to be forced to gather all the expert mercenaries in the city for assistance.

Oathless Sword gave the people present enough time to digest this startling news and was sincerely enjoying their reactions. Once everyone calmed down, he continued, “This quest is the reward Traversing Four Seas got for winning the guild versus guild tournament. Actually, we think that this is a chain quest.”

Everyone broke into activity once more. They had thought up until now that the greatest form of a solo quest was a chain quest, whereas the harder form of a party quest was a competitive quest. Not one of them had heard of a guild quest possibly being a chain quest.

The men of Young Master's Elite looked at Gu Fei. While talks about chain quests had been circulating for so long, Gu Fei could possibly be the only player who had managed to complete one thus far.

This was not due to no one stumbling on to a chain quest but due to most players meeting with failure halfway through or reaching a point where they could not advance any further and could only put the chain quests on hold. So far, Gu Fei was the only player the five knew who had completed a chain quest.

Oathless Sword reveled in everyone's reaction once more before continuing, “The quest itself is very simple. It is a [Yabiao](#) Mission!”

“Yabiao?” everyone asked, shocked. It was jarring to hear a

wuxia term being said in this western-style VRMMO.

“It is exactly what it says,” Oathless Sword said, explaining, “Players are tasked to protect the quest item until it reaches its destination. Based on the depicted route for the quest, people will pass through five different cities and the journey will take about tens of hours upward just from the walk alone. Since the quest requires escorting the item, we believe that plenty of ambushes and robbers are set along the way.”

Everyone more or less got the gist of the matter after hearing this, and someone promptly asked, “If the difficulty is still unknown, why are you so sure that your guild’s seven hundred fifty players won’t be enough to complete the quest? Also, what made you look for mercenaries?”

Oathless Sword solemnly replied to the person asking the question, “Because there’s a special condition to this quest. Guild members only have one life throughout the quest. This means that once a player dies, the quest will be deemed as ‘failed’ for him or her. Therefore, the player won’t earn the quest reward.”

“Hmm...” Just as everyone considered the finer details of this condition, Oathless Sword informed them of another quest condition, “Plus, guild members are unable to change their character registration from their city of origin throughout the quest. I’m sure everyone understands what that means, right?” Without waiting for them to answer, Oathless Sword explained, “While my guild members can help out at the start of the journey even if they have to sacrifice themselves, once we are dozens or hours away from Yunduan City, there is just no way for the sacrificed members to assist us further when they revive back in the city.”

“So that’s why you decided to hire external help. Since we are not restricted by these quest conditions, we can register our characters in the nearest city even if we spend countless hours traveling, allowing us to revive and continue assisting you on the quest,”

someone coldly remarked.

Oathless Sword replied, “All of you present are experts; it is expected that none of you would easily die like our less skilled members. Still, you are absolutely correct. We need that particular advantage you guys possess that will allow all of you to continue assisting us throughout the journey even after dying. Thus, feel free to request the sort of remuneration you expect from this. We can discuss the payment for your losses during the expedition as well. Besides that...” Oathless Sword intentionally paused for dramatic effect before saying, “The loots we get along the way will be free for all. How’s that?”

This particular caveat was indeed extremely generous. According to the custom when hiring mercenaries, any and all items acquired from monster drops or similar things would entirely belong to the employer. Even if prior arrangements were made, the eventual payout would at most be but a mere morsel. Oathless Sword’s ‘free for all’ offer would mean that any item dropped by the monster a person killed would belong to him or her. The present players were deep in thought, causing Ray’s Bar to descend into silence.

Oathless Sword already had a victorious smile on his lips when he said, “That’s the gist of the matter. Please feel free to think this through and send me a letter once you’ve made a decision. Don’t hesitate to privately message me if there is anything you’re unclear of or if you have any request. We’ll take our leave now.” Oathless Sword, Gale Force, and Youthful Reflection left Ray’s Bar, while the invited mercenaries remained inside the premise to ponder on the matter: “To do or not to do....”

This word’s meaning is similar to hiring an armed escort to deliver an item. Due to the author’s phrasing of it and it implying about protecting an item, we had difficulty finding an English equivalent for the word that would give a ‘Chinese feel’ as the novel mentioned. In the end, we opted to go with the word’s hanyu pinyin.

Chapter 275 - A Thorough Fleecing

Oathless Sword entered Ray's Bar haughtily and left it in a similar fashion. While it might have left a bad taste to everyone's mouth, he had also left behind a very enticing proposal.

Putting aside Traversing Four Seas' set remuneration for this mission, if it was truly a chain quest, the items that would drop along the journey would surely be extraordinary, which was precisely what these experts were finding irresistible. No gamers worth their salt would be unmoved at the prospect of acquiring powerful equipment. Furthermore, rumors abounded in Parallel World that anyone who could complete a chain quest would instantly become an unparalleled expert of the highest order. It was essentially a god-given opportunity for them to be part of a chain quest! With such thoughts in mind, plenty of these mercenaries were already hurrying after Oathless Sword.

Those that remained inside the bar were the ones who could not make up their minds and were still considering the matter thoroughly. The six members of Young Master's Elite were also scrutinizing the proposal together as well.

"So what do we do?" Brother Assist asked.

"I'm definitely doing this! Even if you guys aren't going, as a member of that guild, I am obligated to go!" Royal God Call resolutely expressed his stance on this. While he presented himself as a person loyal to his guild, he was actually an opportunist who acted according to the benefits he could get, and he simply would not pass up something that had a great chance of benefiting him.

Gu Fei frowned. "The journey will take tens of hours upward, so how is that gonna work?"

All of them knew that Gu Fei could not spend much time online daily. As the others expressed their disdain over this issue, Brother Assist said, "There's no way they can finish this quest in one go.

Traversing Four Seas has to consider its members' schedule as well. They'll probably choose those players who are available, much like how they handled the tournament. Miles, you have no issue if it's after 7 P.M., right?"

"Oh... That's fine, I guess," Gu Fei sighed in relief.

"I take it that Brother Assist is interested as well?" Young Master Han turned his gaze on him.

"Heh!" Brother Assist laughed dryly, "It's not often that I can participate in a chain quest; I'm sure I'll be able to gather plenty of data from this run."

Young Master Han swept his gaze over to everyone on the table before saying, "Alright. It's time to express your interest in this! Those who aren't interested in doing this can buy his way out with a bottle of the most expensive liquor."

"D*mn! What's that for?!" All expressed their derision.

"If no one is buying me a bottle, then that means that we are all going," Young Master Han concluded.

"That's so evil!" everyone exclaimed, yet none of them had an issue with this. Everyone was hesitating on whether to participate in the quest or not since there was not a clear reason for either decision, yet Young Master Han pretty much gave everyone an excuse to participate in it, albeit the reason was shamelessly damnable.

This was when some Amethyst Rebirth ladies approached their table and asked Gu Fei, "Are you guys doing it?"

"Yes. And you?" Gu Fei asked in return.

"Who's gonna help that maniac?! You guys shouldn't do it either!" Svelte Dancer harrumphed, going as far as to decide for Young Master's Elite.

"But I wanna do it..." June's Rain was clearly upset.

Understanding her passion for quests, Gu Fei sympathetically said, “No problem. Xiaoyu can join us.”

“Can I?” June’s Rain asked, her face brightening considerably.

“I have no issues!” Gu Fei looked at his fellow mercenaries when he nominated June’s Rain as a temporary member.

Young Master Han’s expression immediately turned frigid, while War Without Wounds and Royal God Call wholeheartedly supported his suggestion. Brother Assist, for his part, turned his face to the side and said, “I’m abstaining.”

“Majority wins. Done,” Gu Fei called out. Although Young Master Han was the group leader, he did not even get a chance to voice his take on the matter.

“That won’t do!” July saw Young Master Han’s expression, and since she was not the sort to trouble anyone, she said to June’s Rain, “It’s best if I accompany you!”

“Yay!” June’s Rain cheered.

“In that case, won’t you need a Priest?” Luo Luo asked.

“I love to fight!” Lie Lie boomed.

“Alright. Let’s head back and ask the others if they wish to go as well.” July gestured for the ladies to leave. Stunned, Svelte Dancer chased after them, “Hey! I’m going too if you’re all going!”

Brother Assist looked at the departing ladies. He waited until they were out of earshot before saying, “Honestly speaking, I think Traversing Four Seas only invited them due to Svelte Dancer’s presence in it. If Svelte Dancer won’t go, I strongly doubt the rest will have a chance in this.”

The rest of them did not say a word. Gu Fei also comprehended this, so he invited June’s Rain to join them. He knew that if Svelte Dancer refused to go, June’s Rain would never be employed by Traversing Four Seas.

In the blink of an eye, two mercenary groups came to a decision. Sakurazaka Moony, Fireball, and friends also came over to ask Gu Fei, “What did those babes talk to you about?”

“Oh? They were about to join the mission,” Gu Fei replied.

Sakurazaka Moony straightened his back as he waved his arm to his men, “That settles it, then. I’ll look for Oathless Sword.”

“Moony is too cool!” his brothers applauded.

“You may have gotten yourself a girl, but you didn’t forget to look out for your bros; now that’s what we call a real brother!” These reprehensible men left Ray’s Bar soon enough as well.

After that, Black Index Finger, Drifting, and the others also left. Some came over to bid Gu Fei farewell, but none discussed the matter of joining the mission any further, leaving just a handful of tavern patrons. Royal God Call got up and said, “Shall I head over and speak with Oathless Sword about this?”

“Don’t!” Young Master Han gestured for him to sit once more, “We can’t raise our value if you take such a proactive approach. Don’t worry. Oathless Sword may look very casual when he walked out of here, but he is actually the most anxious if no one turns up to help.”

“Is that so? But he really looked like he couldn’t care less!” Royal God Call insisted.

Young Master Han chuckled. “Several days have passed since they received this quest as a prize for winning the tournament. They must have attempted this mission but realized that it was impossible to complete it with the guild’s current strength, leading them to look for mercenaries to help. They can’t be foolish enough to expend gold coins for the mercenaries’ assistance just from reading the quest description, right?”

“They’ve already done it? Why don’t I know about it, then?” Royal God Call asked, confused.

“Lil bro, you’ve clearly been ostracized.” War Without Wounds patted Royal God Call’s head once more.

“That may not be true. As a guild member, isn’t it supposed to show on your quest log?” Young Master Han asked Royal God Call.

“Nope!” Royal God Call shook his head.

Young Master Han appeared to be deep in thought after this.

“What have you found out?” Brother Assist asked.

“The wine today’s a little sour,” Young Master Han replied.

“F*CK!” everyone derided.

“Anyway, you guys can go about your businesses. Leave it to Assist and me to do negotiations with Oathless Sword,” Young Master Han told the others.

As expected, Oathless Sword had not let the cat out of the bag for no reason. Just the fact that they could not complete the guild quest by their merit was depressing. They could only turn to mercenaries for aid in the end; why else would they be willing to fork out money otherwise?

He had even purposely made it sound casual over by Ray’s Bar to cover up this truth and prevent people from making a quick buck by overcharging him. In the end, he was still easily seen through by Young Master Han and other similarly insightful players. Oathless Sword actually felt elated when people immediately chased him to express their interest just after he had left the bar! Their earnest attitude naturally made it easy for Traversing Four Seas to seize the upper hand in the ensuing price negotiations.

However, he soon discovered that the players who had chased after him were not from any powerful mercenary groups. Oathless Sword was keener on getting those mercenaries that made it to the semifinals, yet not one of them came to them.

Clearly, those mercenaries had seen through his ‘cat and mouse’

ploy¹. Oathless Sword could only show sincerity by privately messaging these leaders.

The rumors about Gu Xiaosang and Oathless Sword's matter were true. Given their private dealings with one another, and despite her cursing Oathless Sword endlessly in Ray's Bar, she did not make things difficult for him and easily agreed to lend him a hand.

Brave Surge instantly rejected his offer. He had little involvement with Oathless Sword and he frankly did not plan to aid Traversing Four Seas in this matter since the guild was his Carouse Guild's fierce competitor in Yunduan City. Oathless Sword should really be thankful that Brave Surge did not mess things up for them in secret after realizing that they had difficulties completing the chain quest. As for providing assistance, why would he do that? Oathless Sword knew of this, yet he still extended an invitation to him. On the one hand he wanted to see how Brave Surge would react to this, but on the other hand he wanted to ward them off from trying to sabotage his plan by finding plenty of help for this quest and threatening the latter of incurring all those mercenary groups' wrath.

Guild Leader Brave Surge's reaction was in line with his status and personality. Foe-herder also refused to aid them. He felt very unhappy with Traversing Four Seas' action today since his guild was a competitor for the top position as well. As such, Oathless Sword received quite a few rejections from these large guilds.

However, it was The Black Hand and Young Master's Elite that had dealt him a truly devastating blow. They just so happened to be the two major targets of Oathless Sword this time around. The Black Hand was one of the largest mercenary group in Yunduan City that was unaffiliated with any guild, while Young Master's Elite had members that were considered as top experts in a mercenary group or possibly in the whole of Yunduan City.

It was as if the two groups had colluded with one another; telling

Oathless Sword of the possible danger in this mission, its long completion period, how the profits mostly depended on drops, the possibility of losses without gaining any benefits... Both claimed that it was bad business given the potential risks that their groups had to take on. While they sounded serious, Oathless Sword could read between the lines and tell that they were merely haggling for a better payout!

Oathless Sword gritted his teeth and offered them a high payout. This made the two express their intention to give the matter further thought, yet neither got back to him after 'thinking further'. Despite his anger, Oathless Sword could only raise the already high price he had previously quoted before finally getting the two mercenary groups' agreement to join this expedition.

Just you wait! We'll settle the score once this quest is completed! Oathless Sword resolved inside after suffering such a thorough fleecing.

Chapter 276 - Embark on an Expedition

Traversing Four Seas' gathering of mercenaries finally ended. Except for those mercenary groups under the major guilds in Yunduan City that did not wish to assist Traversing Four Seas in its quest, everyone else agreed to give Traversing Four Seas a hand. While some took this opportunity to fleece Traversing Four Seas thoroughly, the average mercenary groups knew better than to go too hard on this; no one else reached the fleecing level of Young Master's Elite and The Black Hand.

Those players that managed to make a quick buck from this were impressed, "Traversing Four Seas sure is rich."

"It's everyone's quest in the guild, so I'm sure they've collected funds for this! If each of their seven hundred fifty players forked out 100 gold coins, they could collect a total of 75000 gold coins!" Brother Assist exclaimed. This was undoubtedly a hefty sum. Given the capital each member of Traversing Four Seas had, it should not be difficult for everyone to provide 100 gold coins.

The arrangement afterward was exactly as Brother Assist had said; there was no way anyone could play through the tens of hours needed for the quest in one go, so Traversing Four Seas agreed to meet up with all the mercenaries over by the north gate tomorrow. The goal that day was to trek through the Oolong Mountain Range and reach Yueye City before logging off and continuing the next leg the day after. By reaching a new city each day, the mission should be accomplished on the fifth day if everything went as planned.

When Gu Fei got online that day, he headed straight toward the north gate. Quite a crowd of people were gathered by the north gate at 7 P.M., with Traversing Four Seas and the hired mercenary groups making sure their members were all accounted for. Because Traversing Four Seas almost recruited every mercenary group in Yunduan City for this quest, a majority of the players in Yunduan

City caught wind of it and plenty of them came over just to watch the fanfare.

The onlookers watched on enviously, pointing at several prominent players and chattering on.

“Look! That’s Sword Demon! Do you know who he is? What do you mean you don’t? Do you even play games, bro?”

“Over there. That guy is Royal God Call! He’s that Archer.”

“Stop lying! Isn’t Royal God Call a Mage?”

“He had a change of job class!”

“That lady over there is Svelte Dancer! She’s the top pay-to-win player in many MMOs and is currently ranked number one in Parallel World.”

“Whoa! What a total hottie!”

“Ah! That one there! That’s the Video Mage! LOOK!” Gu Fei’s moniker had transitioned from Fugitive 27149, Close Combat Mage, Bounty Hunting Maniac to the latest one: Video Mage.

“Which one is he?! Which one?!”

“That one with an apple stuck to his mouth!”

“Ahhhh! He’s so dashing and outstanding!” Overnight, having an apple stuck to a person’s mouth became in vogue.

Although the agreed upon time was 7 P.M., it was already 7:30 P.M. when all arrived and confirmed their attendance. Oathless Sword surveyed the gathered people before him and felt a great sense of accomplishment. No one knew where Youthful Reflection had gotten a wooden barrel, but he stood on it and yelled at the mob, “Everyone, please settle down!” His words were drowned out in the sea of voices. Many people were actually trying to listen to him, but all they saw was his lips moving.

“Settle down!” Youthful Reflection typed on the guild channel what he had just shouted. At least seven hundred fifty players

before him became quiet, yet the remaining mercenaries and onlookers were more than enough to suppress his voice.

Youthful Reflection got the help of the other Traversing Four Seas' members to control the crowd and finally managed to have everyone settled down. Someone approached Youthful Reflection and passed him a rolled-up piece of paper forming a makeshift megaphone. Youthful Reflection gazed appreciatively at the man as he brought the makeshift megaphone to his mouth, "Hey! Hey!" He tested the volume first before beginning his speech, "Ladies and gentlemen, your mission this time is quite large in scale, so I'm hoping that everyone present will listen to my commands...."

"Tsk!" Many people were already clicking their tongues before Youthful Reflection could even finish his speech. These people were from the various hired mercenary groups. Although the employers were the bosses of these hired mercenaries group during missions, the bosses would usually be the ones listening to their words. Rarely would they find employers that had abilities but lacked manpower, so mercenaries like them were used to taking command of the situations.

The idea Youthful Reflection was currently proposing was exactly this, and although these mercenaries knew the importance of having a commander to rely on for such a large-scale operation, they nevertheless felt the need to express their displeasure regarding the proposal!

Youthful Reflection waited for everyone to settle down before continuing, "Everyone, I'm not going to give out commands for your every move. I will only provide everyone my general plan before leaving it to the leaders of the various mercenary groups to command their men. I simply seek your cooperation!"

Someone asked aloud, "How are you going to do that when we are not from the same guild or organization? Are you planning to form a party? Who actually has such a high Command value here?"

It was insufficient to depend on a player's raw voice to command and coordinate many people for such activity. Therefore, it was necessary to utilize the system's conversation channels. Currently, there were just too many mercenary groups working together; since they were from different mercenary groups, the two channels exclusively reserved for such large-scale commanding were off limits to them. While using the party channel was possible after forming a party, there were over five hundred of them right now. Organizing such a party would require a party leader with a Command value of over 50 points, which was simply impossible.

A Command value of 1 point in Parallel World would let a player form a ten-man party. Once it reached 9 points, the party size increased to a hundred, but the experience points required for leveling the Command value would stop being given. According to the game officials, leveling Command value would depend on a character's Reputation. As for what Reputation was... This particular stat on everyone's character window was still a question mark, as if it was locked. It was thus impossible for anyone to reach a Command value of 10 points, much less 50 points.

And yet, Youthful Reflection merely laughed at the person's question, "We don't need everyone to be in a party. I only require each mercenary group leader to form a party with me."

Everyone immediately got what he meant. This man seemed to have planned everything out; he wished to act as the commander-in-chief of the crowd before him, issuing his commands to the mercenary group leaders who would then relay the orders to their men. It was simply overbearing!

Although everyone thought so, none of them refuted the viability of this method. Therefore, all the mercenary leaders came over to join Youthful Reflection's party. Youthful Reflection was still standing atop the wooden barrel as he called out, "XX mercenary group! Is the leader for XX mercenary group here?!"

Five men of Young Master's Elite were wondering if Young Master Han would throw a fit in such a situation. It turned out that Young Master Han did not even care about this; quietly heading over to party up with Youthful Reflection, he silently made his way back without a fuss. The only difference between him and the other leaders was that he was holding a bottle of liquor through all this while the others were holding their weapons, instead....

Because of this episode, it was almost 8 P.M. when the preparation for the journey finished, and the players numbering over a thousand set out under the onlookers' watchful gazes.

A huge portion of the players in the expedition had never left Yunduan City before, and this included the three core members of Traversing Four Seas. But since the quest clearly outlined the route for them to follow, the three men took the lead with an air of noble arrogance.

All sorts of emotions surged among the men setting out; some were excited, others were expectant, and the rest were uneasy. These men knew that they were going to act as escorts in a long road fraught with danger, so it was natural for them to feel nervous right now. After all, they did not know what sort of problems or opponents the system would send their way.

The experts of Young Master's Elite were somewhere within the pack. They were originally intending to keep to a low profile, but the Amethyst Rebirth ladies decided to walk with them due to being 'old friends' with Gu Fei and being rather familiar with Royal God Call and War Without Wounds. Unfortunately for the six men, the Amethyst Rebirth ladies proved to be a crowd magnet; besides the Sakurazaka Moony's skeevy group, a large number of male players kept on closing in on the ladies and engaging them in small talks to pass the time. At first glance, it would even seem as if the entire mob of players revolved around Amethyst Rebirth.

This continued until they reached the Oolong Mountain Range; from here on it was a straight path toward Yueye City. This was

not a path Gu Fei and June's Rain was unfamiliar with.

Soon, they spotted a certain mountain that enlivened Royal God Call and War Without Wounds. They had something to talk about here, as it was the location where Young Master's Elite had done their first mission, which was to eliminate the Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto in Oolong Cave.

This was also where they had aided Gu Fei's escape when he had become Fugitive 27149. War Without Wounds and Royal God Call described Gu Fei as if he was a disowned dog that came to hide in the cave; Royal God Call emphasized that it was thanks to his realistic acting that they had managed to trap the team that Traversing Four Seas had sent after Gu Fei in Oolong Cave's secret passageway. War Without Wounds, meanwhile, claimed credits for the conception of such an ingenious plan without batting an eyelid.

"Wow! Are you guys seriously saying all that?!" Even Brother Assist who was usually uncaring to their antics could not stand their bragging.

"Assist, I don't recall you being there that time."

"Yup. He wasn't there at all."

These two men worked in tandem and quickly eliminated Brother Assist's qualification as a witness.

The ladies only giggled as they listened, each of them taking the two's words with a pinch of salt. Evidently, they were used to Royal God Call and War Without Wounds' bragging and way of exaggerating their exploits. Only Svelte Dancer who was a late addition to the guild and did not know of the two's personality felt disdain for Gu Fei's embarrassing past.

"Are you two looking to die?!" Gu Fei threatened in his infuriation. It was fine if the two men only bragged and exaggerated about their prowess, but they had the habit of

disparaging others as well. This was especially the case with Gu Fei since he was someone who had managed to enter Amethyst Rebirth, which Royal God Call and War Without Wounds were still feeling bitter about. If they could describe Gu Fei like this when he was present, then what more when he was not around?

“Everyone, be careful. We may get ambushed here,” Young Master Han suddenly warned.

“Who could it be? Don’t tell me it’s Sooto?” Royal God Call laughed. Just as he said this, a deafening roar came from the direction of Oolong Cave. Following this, a throng of Mountain Bandits came rushing toward them.

“Whoa! It might really be Brother Sooto!” Royal God Call and War Without Wounds yelped in unison.

Chapter 277 - The Strategically Positioned Mountain Pass

No matter how skilled the mercenaries were, they had never seen such a large-scale surprise attack. How many among them had experienced being attacked by such a dense pack of Mountain Bandits and Robbers when grinding, anyway? When they saw the mob of monsters surging toward them like an avalanche, they could only gasp in trepidation.

The mountain path was not exactly wide, so it restricted the players from advancing forward in large numbers. The players that numbered over a thousand were currently forming a long line, with Traversing Four Seas at the very front and the mercenaries behind. However, while the sight of the large throng of Mountain Bandits and Robbers blitzing right into their midst caused the mercenaries to gasp, the Traversing Four Seas' players did not seem to be affected at all.

These players blocked the monsters' initial charge and uniformly retreated toward the mountain slope, instantly widening the area of the fight.

Young Master Han lifted a bottle of liquor and took a swig, "Look at how prepared they are! I knew they've done this before."

"But the formation..." Brother Assist looked at the scene unfolding before him. The tide of monsters was truly staggering, yet their combat strength was not too threatening. The monsters in Oolong Cave were only at level 30 after all, whereas the large number of players present was at least at level 40 on average. After widening the battlefield with their tactical retreat to the side, the Traversing Four Seas' Warriors positioned themselves to the front to tank the monsters' attacks, with their Mages casting spells, and the Archers uniformly firing off arrows in the exact way that they had done against Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer during the guild versus

guild tournament. The corpses of the attacking monsters began to pile up quickly. From time to time, the monsters' corpses would expire, revealing all sorts of equipment, items, and coins scattered on the ground.

“Traversing Four Seas seems to have no problem dealing with these monsters after assuming that formation. They don't need our help at all!” Brother Assist concluded.

Young Master Han laughed derisively, “They are really prepared this time around; they probably suffered quite a loss when they encountered this ambush for the first time. While these monsters are not exactly strong by themselves, they do have the strength in numbers and the element of surprise. It's only natural for Traversing Four Seas to be at a loss on how to deal with them before! Defending against this sort of attack is easier now since they've made preparations for it.”

Traversing Four Seas did indeed have an easy time defending against this ambush by assuming a pocket formation that easily funneled the monsters with simple A.I. deep inside the pocket. The Mages called forth fire as the Archers' arrows fell like torrential rain. The monsters could not even put up a fight before dying from the enfilade of attacks.

“Strength through numbers, I say!” The players, especially the mercenary groups with under a hundred members, sighed in admiration. These mercenaries had never seen an assault made by players numbering in the hundreds and were naturally in awe of it.

Once the monsters' surprising yet weak ambush was thinned considerably, Traversing Four Seas dispersed its pocket formation and the melee job classes rushed up the slope to counterattack. The mercenaries took this chance to participate in the fight, charging forward and joining the massacre. The surviving monsters looked severely wounded. The players were now the ones holding numerical superiority and ganged up on the monsters, with up to seven or eight melee players surrounding the small fries as four or

five Archers fired off arrows to the leftover monsters.

The mercenaries tried their best to steal kills while they kept their eyes open for monster drops.

The system was truly impartial; although the level 30 monsters' surprise attack was part of the chain quest, they only dropped equipment and items that were not of much use to level 40 players.

Despite their poor quality, the number of monster drops was staggering. Many players that were grinding on the monsters nearby felt dumbfounded when they saw the unending trail of items.

These players happened to be at level 30, so while the items were seen as trash by the level 40 players, they were treasure in their eyes! Seeing the high level players' disinterest over picking the monster drops up, they could not help but salivate at the prospect of picking up the items themselves.

This was when the level 40 players' miserliness reared its ugly head. While they would normally allow low level players to pick up the random item drops at other times, they simply could not stand to let these lowbies take advantage of them and claim the whole mountain of items before their eyes right now.

Uncomfortable with letting these level 30 players freely take the many items, all the level 40 or so players began to pick the items up one by one without leaving even a piece of rag behind. They even smugly looked at the low-level players before taking their leave. The level 30 players were at a loss on how to react at this and wondered just what sin they had committed against the many players for them to be glared at like that.

The large group of players resumed their journey while Traversing Four Seas did a quick headcount of their men. Although they held the upper hand in that fight with the monsters, accidents, such as entering the pocket formation where death was certain, were unavoidable.

Traversing Four Seas only lost about a dozen or so of its men in that fight, while the mercenary groups lost several men in the ensuing counterattack. There were already few monsters by that time, so it was slightly hard to imagine how those people got killed. Eventually, they concluded that those players' Mountain Bandit getup had caused others to mistake them for the monsters... It was rather chaotic at that point, and everyone was fighting together for the first time; such accidents occurring were possible due to their unfamiliarity with one another.

The fight was surprising but manageable; still, it served as a wake up call to what they had signed themselves up for.

The sight of the mob of monsters was frightening, but the fighting itself was made easy by the players' level advantage as well as Traversing Four Seas' readiness to employ the most appropriate PvP formation.

Would it still be this easy if the system launched a surprise attack again in a different location and with higher level monsters?

Traversing Four Seas must have realized the potential difficulties ahead after that fight, which explained why they had decided to hire helpers for the quest. Losing some men despite their knowledge of the ambush, it was really hard to say how Traversing Four Seas would have fared if that had really been a surprise attack. This was truly a serious matter, as the further they were from Yunduan City, the less likely it was for them to be able to replenish their lost manpower.

Mercenaries were good at thinking, so they were able to ponder on stuff related to the mission at hand while steadily walking onward. Soon, this throng of players began the long trek through the Oolong Mountain Range.

This mountain road was unlike the one that they were on before, where the hill gently sloped; this one was literally a mountain pass, where they had a deep abyss one side and a cliff's rockface on the

other. Leaving this path meant leaping off or backing themselves up against the wall. Either option would result in their deaths, which only served to show how dangerous this whole stretch was.

The players' line was stretched thinner, as those who had never taken this road before did not dare to get too close to either side of the mountain pass. What if a sudden gust of wind blew them off the edge? Would it not be embarrassing if future talks about them were of how they had been blown off a cliff? It was better to just keep to the center of this mountain road on their way forward.

Those with highly imaginative minds even began to think of what they would do if the system sprung an ambush on them in this location. Although the cliff's rockface did not seem to have any possible hiding location, the system had a flawed logic sometimes and could very possibly conjure monsters out of thin air; what could they do if the system suddenly chose to spawn a monster right beside themselves? What sort of logic could explain that? Did anyone even question this when that was precisely how monsters spawned in grinding maps?

Such alarmist thinking was Brother Assist's strong suit. Worry was etched deeply on his face when he asked Young Master Han, "Won't we all die if the system suddenly spawns many monsters on this mountain pass?"

"That question is a little difficult for me right now..." Young Master Han evasively said, reasoning, "I'm drunk."

"That's too illogical!" June's Rain actually butted in. "How would the monsters appear here? Crawl their way out of the rocks or something?" She then brushed her hand across the rockface. It was as if she was searching for a gap for monsters to crawl out.

"No need for that! The system only needs to spawn them," Brother Assist used 'spawning of monsters' in grinding maps as the basis of his argument.

Gu Fei was almost in tears. Assist, you've really lost it if you are

speaking logic to Xiaoyu....

June's Rain began to consider Brother Assist's words and the situation at hand. By the time she made the connection, Brother Assist had already forgotten speaking to her about the matter....

“Hey! Why are we not moving?”

Their group's forward march came to a grinding halt, and players began asking the reason for it, but they very quickly quieted down.

This was the good thing about MMOs; talking on a channel was possible! As such, anything peculiar happening to the troops in front would be known immediately to the troops behind. The question of these men behind was quickly answered by the ones in front: “The pass got cut off!”

“Cut off? What do you mean?” Players like the men of Young Master's Elite that had walked through this mountain pass before were baffled by this fact.

Surprisingly, June's Rain came up with an explanation first. “Did the terrain change?”

“What's all this dawdling for?! Just when will we reach Yueye City at this rate?!” Svelte Dancer yelled! She was originally from another city, so she had also walked through this mountain pass before. Svelte Dancer could barely stand the speed that this mass of players was moving at before, and now this already slow pace actually came to a complete halt.

The people at the back did not know what it meant for the mountain pass to be ‘cut off’, but since it was hardly safe to squeeze to the front on this perilous mountain pass, they could only patiently wait for any sort of development ahead. The various mercenary group leaders sent Youthful Reflection inquiries regarding the matter, and he assured them that the issue would be resolved very quickly and requested for them to be patient.

Indeed, everyone soon started to slowly lurch forward once

more. As they continued their trek through the mountain pass, they heard exclamations of surprise from those ahead.

Gu Fei and company finally understood what the exclamations were for when they got to the front themselves. The whole bunch of them gawked at what they saw, “D*mn! The terrain really did change!” June’s Rain felt elated when her assumption was proven right.

About three meters of the road that lay before them seemed to have eroded away. A man-made bridge spanned over this gap at the moment. The bridge was made with two planks of lumber and was three meters long; the walkway it formed was simple and exhilarating. The players who saw it shook with fear. They all had ashen expression and dared not take one step on to the man-made bridge.

“Tsk! What’s so scary about this?!” Svelte Dancer pouted. Getting on to the bridge, she quickly passed several players who were currently on the structure. Her careless walk across the bridge frightened the other players who were also on it.

June’s Rain was the next to get on to the bridge. “This is such a fun mission!” She excitedly leaned over and lifted a piece of the wooden board to examine it closely.

The person in front of her felt his leg give way. Turning to look backward, he discovered that his other foot was stepping on thin air. He then caught sight of the endless abyss that lay beneath him. Upon discovering that there was no longer anything supporting his weight, the person’s leg weakened and his body shook terribly. In the next instant, he dropped down screaming, “AHHHHH!”

Chapter 278 - War Without Wounds' Sin

The person's scream traveled from the simple wooden bridge to the abyss below. Gu Fei and company inclined their heads toward the shrill scream's direction in hopes of hearing the sound a heavy object made when it crashed onto a flat surface. People said that this sort of sound was very wondrous; valleys, deep rivers, and lakes could produce such a sound. Naturally, using a human to make that sound was very cruel.

In the end, all Gu Fei and company could hear was the trembling voices of those players that had their backs leaning against the cliff's rockface. These players looked queasy as they mumbled, "No point in listening... Nothing to hear...."

"'Nothing to hear'? Is it that deep?" That man had been falling for quite some time now. His voice grew fainter and fainter until it finally vanished, yet the sound that they were yearning for never came.

"Is this mountain pass that high up?" Gu Fei mumbled.

June's Rain was still holding on to the wooden board. When she saw that the person in front of her had disappeared, she could not help but be stunned, "He was just here a minute ago. Why did he fall down? Is this bridge not sturdy enough?" June's Rain took two stomps backward.

"AHHHH!" A full-Strength build Warrior taking two stomps backward caused the entire bridge to sway slightly. Those players navigating across the bridge received the fright of their lives and half of them quickly got down on all fours as they glared at June's Rain with rage-filled eyes. In their current situation, even a beauty would earn hate-filled glares from these men for doing such a thoughtless action.

Unfortunately for them, June's Rain cared not for their hate-filled stares. And even if she somehow noticed their stares, she

would never understand the reason behind them. Lowering her head, she muttered, "It's actually pretty sturdy..." She continued taking long strides forward as the people behind her cried for mercy, "Oh, heroine, please put back that wooden board you've picked up!"

It was unknown whether June's Rain had heard their plea or not, but the board remained wedged under her arm as she walked onward.

The man trailing after her quickly retreated from the bridge. Plenty of the Amethyst Rebirth ladies by the bridge glanced at him, "Hey, surely there's no need for that? It's just one board; you can just stride over it."

The man stared intently at June's Rain's back and said, "I think it's better to wait for that heroine to cross the bridge first!"

The Amethyst Rebirth ladies naturally understood June's Rain the best, and they too thought that her stomping about was really frightening. Their hearts could not help but tremble just from looking at the wooden bridge; after all, not all the ladies were as unrestrained as Svelte Dancer or as witless as June's Rain.

Despite this, the entire Amethyst Rebirth was determined to not be cowed by this daunting task. Apparently, the gutless players already made up their minds to give up this mission; they would return to Yunduan City once the others crossed the bridge. The lechers among them found it regrettable that not one lady from Traversing Four Seas or any other mercenary groups was in this bunch.

The men of Young Master's Elite were rather calm about this. Although Brother Assist was a certified worrywart, he was still someone who based everything from logic and evidence. Seeing that many men had successfully crossed the bridge, he was confident enough to cross it as well.

Demonstrating the 'ladies first' chivalrous custom, Young

Master's Elite graciously allowed Amethyst Rebirth to go ahead before following after. Brother Assist was the first to step on the bridge; his footsteps were sure and his heart was firm as he crossed it. Sword Demon, Young Master Han, Gu Fei, and Royal God Call followed behind. War Without Wounds, who was the last one among the group, tapped Royal God Call's back, "Hey, Royal, is this bridge sturdy?"

"What a nonsensical question!" Royal God Call remarked.

"Will it hold someone of my size?" War Without Wounds asked.

Royal God Call blinked. Indeed, they had not seen anyone with War Without Wounds' frame cross the bridge. Seeing War Without Wounds' hesitation, Royal God Call was visibly elated, "WHAT?! ARE YOU SCARED?!"

"What are you saying? Why would I be scared? It's just that these wooden boards look a little thin, even somewhat brittle," War Without Wounds defended himself.

Royal God Call nodded his head, "Perhaps, you should keep yourself as close to the surface as possible when you are crossing the bridge. Increase your contact to the surface for the pressure to be evenly distributed. I suggest you get down on all fours and crawl your way forward. HA HA HA HA!" Royal God Call walked forward once he said that.

"Bro, are you crossing?" The player following War Without Wounds saw that he was hesitating and started pestering him to let him cross first.

The Amethyst Rebirth ladies in front of him were currently looking at him. Their concerned look gave War Without Wounds the courage to cross the bridge, "Of course, I'm crossing it! Why would I not cross it?!" With that, his leg stepped on to the wooden board.

It was clear how different War Without Wounds was from the

others just from that one step, as the wooden board visibly strained to support his weight. He could even feel himself sink ever so slightly, scaring War Without Wounds' very soul, and he reflexively retracted his foot. The player behind him eventually lost his patience. This man had been following War Without Wounds closely behind, so that one back step the latter took pushed the former back toward the other players behind him who were also waiting to cross the bridge. War Without Wounds was strong, but his strength was not stronger than the combination of the many people behind him. There was no retreat for him in the end, and the man behind shoved him forward, "What are you doing?! Get on with it already!"

War Without Wounds staggered from that shove. Cursing out, his feet finally landed on the bridge. The wooden board sagged under his weight, but it did not snap. This assured War Without Wounds, and he began to steadily walk forward.

Gu Fei and the rest had already gotten off the other end of bridge. There were actually more people gathered at this part of the path. After expending so much effort to make his way across the bridge, he discovered that there was no space for him to land his feet on.

"Move! Why aren't you advancing forward? Come on!" War Without Wounds felt danger lurking just below his feet; with him standing still, he felt the uneven surface was straining to support his weight. It was as if it would splinter at any given moment.

"Quickly give me some space to get off the bridge!" War Without Wounds anxiously cried out.

"No space. There's really no space left." Royal God Call was the last person to get off the bridge and he was occupying the last remaining spot of land for anyone getting off it. The entire mountain pass was already filled with players, and War Without Wounds knew that he could not force his way in. This was not a bus; he knew that he could snatch a spot if he forced his way in, but he was also certain that quite a few people would fall off the

edge as a result of his action. War Without Wounds was not inconsiderate enough to do that.

“Why aren’t you guys moving forward, then?” War Without Wounds asked, feeling flustered.

Young Master Han looked him in the eyes and said, “There’s another part of the path ahead that has corroded. They’re currently building a bridge for that. They’ll have to cross that bridge one by one once more, and that’s why we have slowed down.”

Oathless Sword and the other two core members of Traversing Four Seas were currently at the very front, so they were the first to know what was happening. Youthful Reflection relayed this information to the mercenary group leaders who then informed their members accordingly. Young Master Han was obviously not the responsible type. When he learned of this information, he did not relay it to his fellow mercenaries. None of the other players behind War Without Wounds asked a word about this stall, clearly showing that their mercenary leaders had informed them of the situation.

D*mn! So unlucky. Why must it be me that has trouble finding a spot to squeeze in?! War Without Wounds was seething. He could feel the board under him sink deeper with every passing second.

“Ha ha! Stand firmly! If all else fails, you can still get down on all fours!” Royal God Call ridiculed War Without Wounds aloud. The Amethyst Rebirth ladies were just in front of Young Master's Elite’s men, so they heard their conversation. Each of them appreciated the anxiety on War Without Wounds’ face as they stifled their laughter.

This was unbearable to War Without Wounds, so despite the fear he was feeling, he could only project a courageous front to the ladies. He glared disdainfully at Royal God Call, “Hmph! I’m standing perfectly firm. In fact, using two legs is overdoing it; I

think just one foot is enough.”

Although War Without Wounds said that, he was not about to demonstrate it. It was only a passing thought, yet he subconsciously lifted his leg off the board as he spoke. No one noticed his seemingly innocuous move, but things took a turn for the worse because of it.

War Without Wounds’ worry was actually logical. Indeed, the wooden board could barely hold him up, especially when he lifted his one foot like that. The board happened to be the last piece people stepped on before getting off the bridge. After their unnerving journey across the three-meter-long bridge, these people felt somewhat emotional with that last step, so many of them happily stomped on it. Thus, this final wooden board suffered quite the abuse, far beyond any other board that was forming up the entire bridge.

It would have been fine if War Without Wounds had stood on it with his two feet. Once he lifted his leg when he subconsciously thought of doing so, the final piece of wooden board already had enough and broke.

CRACK! The sound everyone was worriedly expecting finally echoed about. As War Without Wounds cried out in surprise, he could feel himself sinking down with the broken board.

It was a really close call. War Without Wounds spread his arms and hooked them on to the two long planks of lumber on both sides. While the two planks were sturdy enough to bear War Without Wounds’ weight, his action caused a far more severe chain reaction than June’s Rain’s. The terror-filled screams from behind him easily drowned War Without Wounds’ cry, as each of them fell on to the abyss below. Many of these players were still clutching on to the little wooden boards that they instinctively reached for when everything gave way, failing to grab a hold of the long planks like War Without Wounds. It was truly embarrassing to watch them fall to their deaths while hugging the planks so

close to their chest.

Every player on the bridge succumbed to gravity with the disappearance of several wooden boards. No one else seemed to be able to cross the bridge after.

The players standing on both sides of the now broken bridge gawked. Eventually, someone lamented, “What a horrendous sin!”

All the players sighed. Suddenly, someone from the opposite side pointed, “Look! There’s a survivor!”

The people on the other side did not know that War Without Wounds had caused the tragedy, so they happily applauded his lucky escape from death.

Brother Assist shook his head, “This is what it truly means to commit a sin!”

Chapter 279 - Single Rope Bridge

War Without Wounds was hanging between two wooden planks like a sausage, but his weight prevented him from swinging with the breeze. Since he was busy trying to escape death, he failed to notice that all the men with him on the bridge had fallen down the abyss as a result of his action!

“Hold on tight, Wounds!” Royal God Call knelt down before him, grinning from ear to ear.

War Without Wounds severely gripped the wooden planks as he growled through gritted teeth, “Quickly pull me up!”

“There’s no space!” Royal God Call said as he looked to his left and right. Indeed, there was no reason for space to suddenly free up on this mountain path just because a dire situation had erupted, so the players remained as packed as ever. And while squeezing in a man or two would be fine, none dared to do so for fear of causing further problems to develop.

As such, War Without Wounds could only hang in there precariously while everyone gawked at him like he was a piece of exhibit; some even started placing bets on how long he could last hanging like so.

“How long do you think he can hold on for?”

“Five minutes. I’ll bet for five minutes.”

“Six minutes for me!”

“Seven!”

“Taking in bets now! All bets are final!”

The adorable players were always able to find enjoyment in the game no matter what happened.

War Without Wounds was tougher than what was presumed, however. Ten minutes had passed, yet he was still hanging on

without trouble. It even looked as if War Without Wounds would have no problems holding on for another hour or so. Strength was not what mattered in situations like this but Resilience. Parallel World's projection of the Resilience stat was rather mystifying, as players received aid from various avenues of the game system for this particular stat.

Thankfully, the reality was not so cruel, and after a dozen or so minutes, the crowd over by Royal God Call's side began to ease up, allowing the players nearby to pull War Without Wounds up on solid land.

Those that did not have the Strength, including Gu Fei, did not dare lend, knowing that they would likely end up getting pulled down by War Without Wounds, instead. Through the concerted effort of June's Rain and another Warrior, War Without Wounds finally managed to escape death. War Without Wounds was very depressed; it was already embarrassing to be hanging like that, and he had to somehow be saved by a lady as well! How was going to face the world from here on?

Players on both sides of the mountain pass cheered when War Without Wounds got saved. It was then that the players began to ask another question: How were the remaining half of the mercenaries still stuck on the other side of the mountain pass going to cross now that the bridge was destroyed?

Before everyone could think further on this, several players emerged from Gu Fei and company's side, sized up the situation, and communicated with those on the other side of the mountain pass. Both sides ensured that long wooden planks were properly placed and began building another bridge.

"Are they from Traversing Four Seas?" everyone wondered.

Young Master Han nodded his head. Youthful Reflection had already told the mercenary leaders about this. "Traversing Four Seas came prepared," Young Master Han told those people around

him, adding, “Last time, this is where they could not continue onward when they attempted the mission. They hired many mercenary groups this time and brought this set-up to pass through this eroded mountain path.”

“They made these themselves?” Everyone looked at the Traversing Four Seas’ members who were bringing out wooden boards to lay on top of the wooden planks.

“Yeah. It sure isn’t simple!” Young Master Han sighed. Parallel World did not have a Carpentry crafting profession, so it was unknown how Traversing Four Seas had managed to create the wooden boards necessary in the first place.

The construction of a new bridge was very quickly finished. Learning their lesson from the previous bridge, the players were very careful when it was their turn to cross it. No one pretended to be bold this time around, patiently waiting for their turn as they gingerly made their way across.

Meanwhile, Gu Fei and company followed the crowd that was slowly advancing on the path. They soon got to the second bridge, with everyone crossing it one by one just like last time. When it was War Without Wounds’ turn, countless players sincerely requested, “Bro, can you be the last one to cross?”

War Without Wounds nodded his head even as tears streamed down his face. He squatted by a corner and waited for everyone to cross the bridge.

On the other side of the bridge, Gu Fei and the rest of their party waited for him to cross. In the end, War Without Wounds did not have to cross the bridge last, as a player of Traversing Four Seas indicated for him to go ahead first. Thankfully, the perilous situation before did not repeat itself. After War Without Wounds successfully crossed the bridge, the last member of Traversing Four Seas pried off each piece of the wooden boards from the bridge while making his way over. Finally, he stuffed the two long

wooden planks into his dimensional pocket as if he were performing a magic trick, which left everyone watching amazed.

The throng of players then continued to advance slowly. They crossed four crevasses before their forward advance was once more halted for a long while. The mercenary leaders informed their members of the reason for the hold up: The crevasse this time was wider than before and Traversing Four Seas was currently trying to find a solution since the planks that they had prepared were not long enough to bridge the gap.

Eventually, the Traversing Four Seas' player who was in charge of keeping the bridge-construction materials approached Young Master's Elite and addressed Gu Fei, "Miles bro? Our guild leader wishes to invite you to the front for a while."

"Why me?" Gu Fei asked, puzzled.

Young Master Han revealed elation as he patted Gu Fei's shoulder, "Let's go. I'll accompany you over."

"Our guild leader said that only you are capable of crossing the crevasse without using a bridge," the player supplied.

Gu Fei nodded his head in understanding. Although he had been using the man-made bridges just like everyone else, he could actually choose not to do so by teleporting himself through the crevasses. It was not just him, either. The first crevasse that they came across was only three meters wide, and anyone who did long jump could cover that distance. However, the psychological barrier created upon seeing the deep abyss was not something any person could easily overcome.

Together with the Traversing Four Seas' player and Young Master Han, Gu Fei made his way to the very front of the regiment like a prophesied savior. The crevasse looming before him looked to be about seven or eight meters wide, and the mist pervading this gap somewhat obscured the mountain path ahead. Oathless Sword, Youthful Reflection, and Gale Force, the Traversing Four Seas'

three core members, were squatting ahead with miserable expression on their faces. Once they spotted Gu Fei, they promptly got up and met him.

“The wooden planks are not long enough. We didn’t expect that there would be such a wide ‘gutter’ here,” Oathless Sword said directly. Plenty of players had begun calling this particular crevasse a ‘gutter’ to alleviate the the fear in their hearts by making it sound less scary.

Gu Fei asked, “What’s the plan, then?”

“We’re gonna use ropes,” Oathless Sword answered.

“So you want me to secure the rope on the other side for everyone to cross using it?” Gu Fei asked.

“That’s right.” Oathless Sword nodded his head.

Gu Fei stood by the edge of the crevasse, swept his gaze around, and smiled, “Aren’t you guys afraid of suspending from it?”

Oathless Sword sighed. “Many of us are naturally afraid... but we don’t have a choice. Can Miles bro cross this ‘gutter’?”

“I think so!” Gu Fei nodded his head.

“I will have to trouble you, then,” Oathless Sword said.

“Mmm! Get everyone to make some space for me!” Gu Fei said.

“Eh?” Oathless Sword was nonplussed.

“It’s too wide, so Blink won’t be enough to get me to the other side; I’ll need to jump to extend my range,” Gu Fei explained.

Once more, Oathless Sword was stunned before flicking a thumbs-up, “Miles bro is truly a bold man.”

The players around were from Traversing Four Seas, so Oathless Sword easily got them to free up space for Gu Fei.

Gu Fei backed several meters away from the edge and rubbed his palms together. Young Master Han approached Oathless Sword at

this moment, rubbing his palms as well, “Boss Oathless, I believe this can be considered as a unique contribution that falls under the terms of the contract we have previously agreed on.”

Oathless Sword helplessly nodded his head, “I’ll note it down.”

“Heh!” Young Master Han folded his arms, stood by the side, and nudged his head toward Gu Fei, “Go on, then!”

“Naturally!” Gu Fei was already in position. Unhesitatingly sprinting toward the cliff edge, he launched himself forward and cleared almost half of the crevasse. Halfway through his flight, he finished his incantation, disappearing and reappearing by the opposite end; his legs were firmly planted to the ground.

Thunderous applause resounded.

Everyone was not applauding Gu Fei’s flawless execution of the Blink skill but his courageous leap to the crevasse. Not many were brave enough to leap into certain death with an abyss looming below like him even if they had access to Blink, yet Gu Fei merely exchanged a few words with Oathless Sword, and in the next moment, he was casually leaping over the crevasse while casting a spell.

“Rope!” Gu Fei shouted from the other side.

Oathless Sword took out a huge axe, tied a knot to its handle, revved up, and hurled the axe toward Gu Fei. Gu Fei did not reach out to grab it; instead, he waited for the huge axe to plant itself right into the ground.

The mountain path on Gu Fei’s end barely had anything to tether the rope with. Oathless Sword’s plan was to tie either ends of the rope to the axe’s pommel before hammering the axe firmly into the ground.

Naturally, it was hardly safe for only one set to be driven into the ground. Oathless Sword reached his hand out and his underlings handed over three more huge axes to him. The generic axes were

the sort used for manual labor. A majority of the players were at level 40, after all, so collecting inferior axes was not particular easy.

Once that was done, someone else threw a hammer over to Gu Fei. The latter then busied himself with firmly securing the axes to the ground. He had low Strength, so this work was accomplished at a slow pace. Meanwhile, Oathless Sword and several other Warriors worked on their end and easily managed to drive five huge axes to the ground, with the rope firmly winding around their handles. Gu Fei was still busy on his end; he hammered far more than anyone else, yet his efficiency was still far lower in comparison.

The handles of the axes were not sharp, so they were unable to firmly lodge themselves into the ground. While hammering them into the ground was easy at the start, Gu Fei had to put more effort into his hammering the deeper the axes went into the earth. Gu Fei worked on them for a long time before finally securing the four axes and their pommels into the ground. When that task was accomplished, he tied the rope around their handles as everyone anxiously looked on.

“Miles bro, put your back into it! Wind the rope a few more times to make it secure!” Oathless Sword hollered.

“Tie a dead knot!” Young Master Han reminded.

Eventually, a single-rope bridge could be seen stretching across the crevasse.

“Who’s gonna go first?” the people on the other side looked at one another, with not one volunteer in sight.

“I’ll do it!” As the guild leader, Oathless Sword showed off his bravery by volunteering to test the single-rope bridge’s sturdiness. Dusting his hands off, he grabbed on to the rope and leaped down.

Just like how War Without Wounds had managed to last holding

on to the wooden planks previously, Strength was truly not what these players needed in situations like this but rather Resilience to hold on. Thus, this was not a particularly difficult task for the players in the game. Oathless Sword tightly held on to the rope with his two hands as he wormed his way across. It turned out that the climb back up onto the ledge was what required a lot of effort, and Gu Fei's Strength was just too weak! There was only so much he could do to help, so Oathless Sword wasted quite a lot of time before managing to climb back up. Exhaling his exhaustion, he turned around to shout, "Come on over! It's very well made; there won't be any complications!"

Chapter 280 - The Miserable War Without Wounds

The sight of Oathless Sword successfully worming his way across the single-rope bridge gave plenty of the men watching courage since his armor and size were similar to War Without Wounds'. No one was worried that the rope bridge could not take their weight any longer, and the only hurdle they had to overcome was their fear of the act of crossing itself.

“Stop looking down. Just move faster if you’re afraid; this is just a game, after all. It’s really very easy. Come on over quickly!” Oathless Sword encouraged the person currently making his way across the rope, “You’re almost here! Just a meter more!”

Once the man reached the other end, Oathless Sword, who possessed Strength far greater than Gu Fei’s, easily lifted the man up.

“D*mn. You’re so noisy...” The man whom Oathless Sword had helped up was Young Master Han. He absentmindedly dug his ears before joining Gu Fei by the side of the mountain path.

Players began to worm their way across the crevasse one by one. Oathless Sword was being very attentive to all the details, constantly checking the condition of the rope Gu Fei had tied up to see if it had come loose before returning to the ledge to pull up each player who had crossed the bridge. The players behind him slowly accumulated and eventually became quite the hindrance. Oathless Sword shooed these players with his hand, “Continue onward without me!”

Gu Fei was about to join this newly formed team when he saw Young Master Han staying put.

“Aren’t we going with them?”

“I’m staying to watch!” Young Master Han turned his gaze on the

rope, “Not one player has fallen after all this time....”

“Ugh... You’re really despicable,” Gu Fei criticized Young Master Han even as he folded his arms and stood by the side to observe the players crossing the bridge as well. Oathless Sword could not admonish the two men who had decided to stay behind just to watch the whole procession since they were not from his guild!

Crossing the single-rope bridge was more perilous than the wooden bridge. However, it was precisely because of this that the players were more cautious as well. It was not hard to do this in a game, so no one fell down into the abyss with everyone being extra careful. After all, it was only War Without Wounds’ wild actions that had led to that unfortunate situation before. As such, while some players had fallen off the wooden bridge due to their negligence, none had fallen down the single-rope bridge thus far, albeit the time these players took to cross the bridge was much slower compared to before.

Many players managed to cross the rope bridge until only the members of Young Master’s Elite were left. Actually, there were also those players who had given up crossing the single-rope bridge and were currently standing by the cliff’s rockface.

The Amethyst Rebirth ladies also paused for quite some time when they got to the rope bridge. This test of courage was tougher than the previous one, so even persuasive words like “It’s only a game” and “You’ll be fine” were not enough to ease their sense of dread. This was not a television series where words of encouragement could easily allow the ladies to overcome their fear, after all.

“It’s really fine, Grape. Just look at how I do it!” Grape, whom Royal God Call was very fond of, was extremely afraid of crossing the single-rope bridge. Incessantly shaking her head, she refused to cross the bridge no matter how hard Royal God Call persuaded her. Finally, he decided to use himself as an example; grabbing on to the rope, he nimbly made his way over to the other side. He did

everything he could to show how easy it was to cross the rope bridge, even throwing an encouraging smile to Grape time and time again.

“See? It’s really easy. Come on; it’s your turn now, Grape!” Royal God Call shouted from the other side of the crevasse once he made his way across.

Grape timidly looked around her; the Amethyst Rebirth ladies that were unafraid of heights had long made their way across, and those that remained did not find the least bit of courage in Royal God Call’s display. They looked at one another before deciding that they had far more in common with those players standing by the cliff’s rockface.

Oathless Sword, who was still standing by the edge of the crevasse, asked aloud, “Is there anyone else coming over?!”

The players on the other side looked at one another. Those of Young Master's Elite who had made it across felt rather stunned when they realized that War Without Wounds had yet to make it to their side. Looking across, they could see him visibly hesitating.

“You better get your g*dd*mn *ss over here! Don’t you dare drag us down!” This was actually the first time their mercenary group leader, Young Master Han, had publicly expressed his anger. He even tossed the unfinished bottle of liquor in his hand toward the cowardly crowd on the other end in his fury. Luckily, no one got struck by it, and the bottle shattered into pieces upon contact to the ground, spilling its content on the mountain path.

“Is there anyone else wishing to cross the bridge?! Please do so immediately!” War Without Wounds looked around him.

“F*CK! You’re the one I’m referring to! Stop acting and get over here already!” Young Master Han took another bottle from his dimensional pocket to toss over, but when he saw that the bottle was still full, he could not bring himself to do so. Quickly unscrewing the cap, he drank as much as he could.

“I... uhm... this...” War Without Wounds stuttered.

“It’s fine, Wounds bro. I even made it across, so why wouldn’t you?” Oathless Sword smiled.

War Without Wounds saw that Oathless Sword was not lying since the latter had the same size as himself. There should be no reason for him to not make it across if the man could! It was not as if War Without Wounds had acrophobia, either; he was mainly worried about his heavy weight, especially after his previous harrowing escape from death at the wooden bridge. Simply put, he did not feel safe doing this.

“Come on over quickly!” Young Master Han bellowed.

“It’s gonna be fine! This bridge is really well-made compared to that wooden bridge from before!” Oathless Sword assured him. He had apparently heard of War Without Wounds’ experience hanging on to the fallen wooden bridge like a dry sausage.

With one man coaxing while another berating, War Without Wounds tightly held the rope and shouted, “I’m coming over now!” With that, he leaped off the edge.

Everyone applauded War Without Wounds’ courage as Royal God Call shouted, “M*th*rf*ck*ng Wounds, you better drop down and die!”

Sadly, his jeering did not work. War Without Wounds carefully shifted himself across the rope bridge. He was quite possibly the most attentive out of everyone there at crossing the bridge, and he slowly but surely advanced forward with measured and precise movement. A solemn expression was carved into his face as if he were a Boss in-game. Everyone was entranced by his attempt. They were thinking of how enjoyable it would be to see War Without Wounds drop down despite him treating the matter with graveness!

No one knew if it was the crowd’s unified thought that had made

it happen, but when War Without Wounds was about two thirds of the bridge, everyone heard and saw the rope snapping in two.

“HE DROPPED!” everyone exclaimed in a voice that betrayed their glee over his misfortune.

“M*TH*RF*CK*R...” War Without Wounds’ voice was drowned by the wind, echoing as he fell. Due to the lack of anything exciting happening further down the mountain path, many of the players immediately messaged one another when they heard the snapping sound of the rope reverberate through the ridge, “What happened?”

It was then that a feeble moan was heard from down the crevasse, “Quickly pull me up!”

“F*ck. He’s not fallen into the abyss; he’s actually still hanging there!” Royal God Call exclaimed. He lay prone by the edge of the crevasse and poked his neck out. War Without Wounds was holding on to the rope for dear life.

“Just let go of the rope!” Royal God Call advised.

“You just wait, Royal; I’m gonna hurl you down this crevasse once I get up there!” War Without Wounds raged.

“How arrogant!” Royal God Call pulled out an arrow and was about to nock it, “Quickly call me Grandpa Royal!”

“Alright. Settle down, you two!” Gu Fei pulled Royal God Call to the side as he waved to a few players around him, “Hurry and pull that man up here!”

“Hold on tight, Wounds!” Brother Assist shouted.

Through the combined efforts of a few men, War Without Wounds was hoisted up to solid ground. He lay there looking at the boundless sky above him with a face covered in bruises. His armor got dented from its impact against the crevasse’s rockface.

Young Master Han bestowed Heal on him. “How are you?”

“Fine... I think...” War Without Wounds was breathless, not from exhaustion but from anxiety. His close encounter with death today had taken a toll on him that was not visible to the naked eye.

“Alright. You’ve definitely worked the hardest during this stretch, so I’m sure you’ve earned quite a lot of points!” Young Master Han consoled as he gestured at Sword Demon.

“Yup!” Sword Demon affirmed this. Taking out a little booklet, he diligently recorded: mental reimbursement - 20 points.

War Without Wounds was only able to stand up after quite some time; Royal God Call had the foresight to make himself scarce from him. War Without Wounds seemed to have been enlightened by something as he did not bother to pursue his quarrel with Royal God Call and merely asked, “Will there be any more bridges ahead?”

“It doesn’t seem to be the case,” Oathless Sword smilingly replied, adding, “My brothers ahead have yet to encounter another.”

“Oh!” War Without Wounds answered as he waved his arm, “Alright, everyone! Let’s go!”

There were indeed no more crevasses ahead as the group continued forward. The mercenary groups and Traversing Four Seas did a headcount; quite a lot of players abandoned this expedition due to the bridge crossing. This was especially true for a large number of the female players – a fact that greatly pained many male players.

No more abnormalities cropped up for quite a while; just as they were about to complete their trek through the Oolong Mountain Range, unrest spread from the front of the group. War Without Wounds trembled, “Did we encounter another eroded path?”

“No. We’ve encountered enemies,” Young Master Han replied.

“Tsk! What’s so scary about that?” War Without Wounds’ back

straightened when he heard this.

“It’s quite troublesome to engage enemies here! This narrow mountain path makes it impossible for men to get into formation! Many players are feeling helpless due to this fact. Look at all these mercenaries stuck behind; there’s just no way for us to lend a hand here!” Brother Assist explained.

“How are we going to help when we don’t even know what’s going on?” Royal God Call jumped up and down, trying to catch a glimpse of what was happening ahead of them.

“What’s the situation?!” everyone asked Young Master Han.

“The monsters that have spawned are blocking the mountain path, so we can’t continue forward,” Young Master Han informed them.

“What’s the monster type?”

“Mountain Bandits.”

“What’s so scary about them?” everyone scoffed.

“There’s a Boss leading them,” Young Master Han answered.

They could feel their hearts tighten at that. According to the game officials, monsters that fought alongside their Boss would have higher combat strength, and they would prioritize the commands of the Boss beyond anything else. Although the Boss’s intelligence and resourcefulness were not greater than players, the Boss’s commands could ignore the threats on the monsters. Hence, the methods players would employ to pull these monsters depended entirely on the Boss; even if a player killed the monsters, the aggro from the remaining monsters might not even be drawn appropriately if they were obeying the the Boss’s commands.

The only flaw to this unquestionable discipline these monsters possessed depended entirely on the quality of the Boss’s intelligence.

“So what’s the situation right now?” they asked Young Master Han.

“Our men have retreated for now and are currently re-organizing themselves for the next assault,” Young Master Han replied.

“Looks like it’s time for us experts to shine!”

“That is precisely why we are currently being called to the frontline!” Young Master Han affirmed.

Chapter 281 - Charging into the Enemies' Ranks

The experts that Traversing Four Seas was referring to were of course not just the men of Young Master's Elite, and many other mercenaries were summoned to the front as well. Traversing Four Seas intended to form a team of elites to break through the monsters' ranks and observe how the monsters would react after.

Young Master's Elite soon arrived to the front of the expedition. Once Oathless Sword spotted the experts of every mercenary group arrive, he happily told them, "We'll be relying on you esteemed experts this time around."

"Exactly as expected..." Young Master Han stated dryly on the mercenary channel.

"Mmm. Tasking the mercenaries with this, they clearly intend to use us as cannon fodders!" Brother Assist could also read between the lines.

"It can't be helped; we have to do it, anyhow," Sword Demon calmly commented.

Indeed, the mercenaries could do nothing about this. Although they knew that they were being treated as no more than cannon fodders, they had no choice but to charge into the fray.

"Everyone, my skill can only last for twenty-five seconds, so please use the time wisely and fight hard!" Silver Moon was the one who spoke this time, informing those present of his party-wide skill. Young Master's Elite had never expected that a day would come where they would have the chance to experience Silver Moon's skill, and each of them sighed at how ever-changing life was. "But! If there is someone assisting me, this skill duration can last a bit longer," Silver Moon continued. Everyone did not know why he had said this. Even Oathless Sword bewilderedly asked,

“Silver Moon bro, what do you mean by that?”

Gu Fei followed Silver Moon’s gaze and realized that the latter was looking at Sakurazaka Moony’s group; Vast Lushness was currently in it. Is he talking about her? Gu Fei thought to himself. This was when he saw Vast Lushness turn her head to Silver Moon. She obviously heard his words, yet she merely raised a hand to flip him off with a face devoid of any expression.

Gu Fei chuckled at this. Turning his head to look at Silver Moon, he heard the latter say, “Nothing. I’m just afraid of my skill getting interrupted before its duration expires as a result of my death.”

“Oh. You don’t have to worry about that.” Oathless Sword called two Priests over and pointed to Silver Moon, “You two are assigned to Silver Moon bro.” Assigning two Priests to a lone man clearly showed the importance Traversing Four Seas put on Silver Moon during this group fight.

“Melee job classes, please prepare yourselves. Archers and Mages, lend assistance at your discretion. Please be careful, though and try not to injure your allies,” the commander-in-chief, Youthful Reflection, ordered.

Following this, Warriors, Thieves, and Fighters came forward and formed a party together; Knights began to bestow blessings on them while some Priests mixed within. Mages and Archers, meanwhile, retreated to the back of the formation and waited. Due to how narrow the mountain path was, their strategic retreat placed them far from the upcoming fight and essentially out of sight from the battlefield ahead.

“What blessing do you want?” Brother Assist asked Gu Fei with a smile. Gu Fei drove his sword into the ground as he grandly stood within the ranks of the melee job classes. The surrounding players gazed at him in awe as they whispered to one another, “Is he really the Close Combat Mage?”

Luo Luo approached him with her staff held aloft, grinning

cheekily, “You want a Priest all to yourself?” With that, Heal wafted on Gu Fei.

“Stop wasting your mana...” Gu Fei said weakly, adding, “You should focus your attention on the ladies, instead.”

“I don’t think they need my help at all...” Luo Luo giggled. Turning his gaze over, Gu Fei saw a crowd of Priests attentively attending to Svelte Dancer, July, Will-low, Lie Lie, June’s Rain, and the other ladies who were going to participate in the fight.

“It’s up to you, then!” Gu Fei had nothing more to say and merely focused his attention on the fight ahead. Meters ahead, a group of Mountain Bandits was blocking the mountain path. If they were to break through the monsters’ ranks here, the terrain would open up into a wide plain ahead, which would let them spread out accordingly and confront the level 30 monsters fearlessly.

“Isn’t a Boss supposed to be in command here? Where is he?” Gu Fei asked.

“Isn’t that the one?” Luo Luo pointed to somewhere in front.

Gu Fei looked at where she was pointing and spotted a Mountain Bandit standing distinctively from its kind. Upon closer examination, Gu Fei made a shocking discovery. “Isn’t that Sooto? Man, he sure looks different with his clothes on!”

The players around him gave him a furtive glance. Just what sort of unspeakable relationship did this man have with the Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto?

Time waited for no man. Their trek through the Oolong Mountain Range had cost them considerable time, especially if they included the series of crevasses that they had crossed; plenty of players were already anxious to log off by this time. After making the necessary preparations, Youthful Reflection informed them of the fighting stratagem, “Charge in from their flanks, but don’t immediately engage their Boss.”

The players rubbed their fists in anticipation as Youthful Reflection raised his arm out, “Archers of Traversing Four Seas, get ready! It’s time to serve the enemies some appetizers... FIRE!”

With that command, an entire wave of arrows from behind sailed over the heads of the mercenaries and toward the group of Mountain Bandits ahead.

“CHARGE!” the melee job classes roared in unison. Waving their weapons at hand, they ran after the hail of arrows and dove straight to the monsters.

Silver Moon raised his King’s Blade and was about to activate King’s Command when two figures – red and black – flitted out from the team and toward the Mountain Bandits ahead of everyone else.

Youthful Reflection slapped his thigh in anger. This ragtag army of players really would not do; there was not even an ounce of discipline in them! “Don’t charge in alone! Stay in your formation!” As he yelled this out, the two figures exchanged looks before shouting back in unison, “Keep up, then!”

How were they going to keep up, though? With so many low-Agility Warriors in the melee team, keeping up with Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer was hardly possible even if they doped themselves! Players like the speedster Sword Demon had the ability to keep up, but they understood the importance of matching their speed to the main attacking force.

It was not that Gu Fei did not understand this concept as well; he had originally not intended to rush out like this, yet Svelte Dancer mad dash forward had strongly reminded him of their days fighting in the guild versus guild tournament for Amethyst Rebirth, and before he knew it, he had dashed forward as well in a burst of adrenaline.

The Archers’ arrows had rained upon the enemies’ ranks by now. The Mountain Bandits that were attacked would naturally retaliate

accordingly. With a wave of Sooto's saber, the Mountain Bandits' battlecry rang through the fighting field as they charged forward. These monsters appeared before Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer in a short while.

"Twin Incineration! Incinerate!" This chanting was accompanied by the pivoting of Gu Fei's whole body as he advanced forward. Once he was within the Mountain Bandits' ranks, he quickly brandished his sword about, causing a circle of flames to emerge and leaving all the players watching tongue-tied. Was this Twin Incineration or Cyclone?

Svelte Dancer was naturally no slouch. With just basic attacks, she efficiently took down the nearby Mountain Bandits. When Gu Fei's Twin Incineration ended, Svelte Dancer was already plunging her dagger into a Mountain Bandit beside him as she happily said, "He he! I bet your skill is on cooldown!"

Everyone was dumbfounded by their display of indomitable strength; even Youthful Reflection slapped his thigh raw, "D*mn! How can these two seamlessly coordinate with each other despite being so ill-disciplined?!"

Gu Fei was still a force to be reckoned with despite his lack of any ready spells, and his sword elegantly slashed the Mountain Bandits around him until they were bloodied. He held half of the charging monsters by himself while Svelte Dancer took care of the other half.

His skill cooldown soon ended.

"Excuse me!" Gu Fei said. Svelte Dancer then wordlessly brought her massacre to the other side as Gu Fei cleared up another group of Mountain Bandits around him with a spell.

Youthful Reflection slapped his thigh once more as he roared at the two players, "FLANK THEM! FLANK THEM!"

The other players returned to their senses and began engaging

the Mountain Bandits earnestly as well. They were infected by Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer's bloodlust and fought the monsters with equal ferociousness. The level 30 monsters appeared insignificant in the face of these experts.

The Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto grandly wielded his saber and the monsters started retreating. All the players were elated. That was really easy! Was there even a need to surround them? Everyone should just butcher them right here and right now!

Just as the players thought that they could force their way within the Mountain Bandits' ranks and begin the slaughter, Sooto suddenly raised his saber. Following this, his underlings immediately became invigorated, thundered their battlecry, and threw themselves at the players.

The players suddenly found themselves under attack from all sides. When they calmed themselves enough to assess the situation that they were in, they could only utter one word: "F*CK!"

"It's a pocket formation!" Youthful Reflection slapped his thigh for who knew how many times. Those Mountain Bandits quickly retreated once they could no longer bear the players' assault. This forced the players to push inward, creating a situation that allowed the Mountain Bandits to encircle them from all sides. This tactic that allowed the enemies to attack them in an isolated pocket was very similar to the one that Traversing Four Seas had previously used to deal with the Mountain Bandits in Oolong Cave. Currently, it was entirely unknown if the formation was intentionally employed by the monsters.

At any rate, the players that were presently surrounded from all sides were in trouble. Silver Moon's King's Command eventually ended and the players' initially fearsome push got taken down a notch. Silver Moon was consuming fruit within their ranks, and everyone fervently hoped for him to immediately replenish his mana so that he could use the party-wide skill once more. However, Silver Moon could only laugh to himself bitterly; even if

his mana was replenished, he would have to wait for his skill's ten-minute cooldown to end still! Could this fight even last for ten minutes?

When a row of Bandits fell, another row would immediately replace it, sealing the players within the monsters' isolated pocket with no escape in sight. Youthful Reflection anxiously ordered the players to charge out of the enemies' encirclement. While he knew that the players were capable of contending with the enemies, their current situation would certainly force them into a battle of attrition.

These monsters had no fear of death, so it was easy for them to endlessly replenish their frontline as long as there were still Mountain Bandits alive. In contrast, the players could not use such a sacrificial method. As such, those who ran out of mana could only retreat and be replaced by new players to prevent their defense line from collapsing. The crux of the problem soon became apparent: this narrow mountain road did not give the players enough space to rotate effectively – this was precisely why Youthful Reflection had ordered the players to break through the Mountain Bandits' encirclement.

At the moment, only Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer seemed to possess the ability to force their way out of the enemies' encirclement. The two's efficiency at clearing the Mountain Bandits was exceptionally high. Whenever Gu Fei cleared out a swath of the monsters with his Twin Incineration, everyone could advance by a huge step every time. Noticing the opportunity that the two presented for them to break through the enemies' encirclement, the players immediately focused their support in the two's direction.

Youthful Reflection was elated that everyone had located a possible point to break through, but before he could even express his happiness, he saw Gu Fei stop pushing forward and retreat among the players with an apple in his mouth.

Youthful Reflection was now enraged, “What are you doing at this crucial point?!”

“Can’t be helped; he’s out of mana!” said the Archer Royal God Call. He was not a part of the team that had charged in and was currently hugging his bow near Youthful Reflection.

Youthful Reflection felt like crying, but no tears would come out! Just this retreat of Gu Fei to replenish his mana was enough to affect the state of the entire battle itself.

Chapter 282 - Leaving Everyone Breathless with His Extraordinary Fighting Skill

Young Master Han, who was watching the fight before him, was incessantly shaking his head. Even Youthful Reflection could tell that Gu Fei's retreat to recuperate his mana was extremely troublesome, yet the man in question did not know of this. Actually, Young Master Han did not put his hopes on Gu Fei from the start since he knew that the latter had insufficient mana to get out of the monsters' encirclement. They would probably have an easier time if it were players that encircled them, as Gu Fei's monstrous damage output could strike fear in their hearts. Unfortunately, the Mountain Bandits the system spawned were not programmed to feel fear when facing formidable players.

Many people were currently feeling annoyed at Gu Fei! It was as if he had realized this himself as he suddenly returned to the frontline with the apple still stuck in his mouth. Waving his Moonlit Nightfalls through the Mountain Bandits, he spat out the apple and recited the Twin Incineration's incantation. The flames that burst forth went around him again, causing everyone to be dumbfounded. Many of the gathered players gawked at the half-eaten apple of Gu Fei's. What sort of apple was that? How could it replenish his mana in just a short while? Many of them strongly resisted the urge to inspect the half-eaten apple that lay on the floor.

When Gu Fei returned into the formation, Svelte Dancer immediately coordinated her attacks with him and took that chance to ask, "How did you recover your mana so soon?"

"I'm also wondering about that myself. How strange!" Gu Fei's mana was continuously getting replenished even as he spoke. With his rudimentary gaming knowledge, he could not make sense of this and could only do his best to expend it. Flourishing his

Moonlit Nightfalls, Gu Fei pointed toward the monsters' side and chanted, "Electric Wall! Fall!"

The air instantly crackled with electricity amid the players' anxiety, yet nothing else happened. Gu Fei felt stunned; the air should form a wall of lightning, so why did nothing appear?

Young Master Han also found Gu Fei's grand casting of a spell that did not cause anything to be rather strange. Knowing how well Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer worked together, he quickly sent him this message: "Use an AOE spell to burn a path out for everyone!"

"Right!" Gu Fei replied. The mana consumption for Electric Wall was on the high side, and he currently did not have enough for it. Nonetheless, his mana was still being replenished continuously. Gu Fei did not bother to dwell on this. Seeing that his mana bar was filled up once more, he lifted his sword and cast Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno.

His casting time was still slow. Having chanted the incantation, the ground blazed into a firestorm that burned down a whole swath of Mountain Bandits. Young Master Han felt pissed, though. "What did you use that for?! Cast Descending Wheel of Flames, instead!"

"Eh?!" Gu Fei was nonplussed for a bit before slapping his forehead at the sight in front of him.

The blazing inferno raged for five seconds. Given his 'Insta-kill Mage' moniker, not one player dared to step into the spell's AOE for fear of getting killed by it. In contrast, the Mountain Bandits fearlessly swarmed into the sea of flames and filled the space he had created in a jiffy.

Gu Fei quickly learned from his mistake; raising his hand, he unleashed Descending Wheel of Flames once he had enough mana. The players were finally able to capitalize on this chance of him clearing out another patch of Mountain Bandits, allowing them to

tear through the enemies' encirclement.

"Do you still have mana? Continue!" Young Master Han shouted to Gu Fei.

"It's like I have unlimited mana!" Gu Fei was elated. Descending Wheel of Flames was still on cooldown, so Gu Fei opted to teleport himself into the Mountain Bandits' midst and slashed them with Twin Incineration, swiftly clearing another small circle. Svelte Dancer darted forward to aid Gu Fei at the first opportunity as the other players did their best to keep up with the two's pace.

"Alright. It's back!" Gu Fei's sword slew several Mountain Bandits just as Descending Wheel of Flames' cooldown ended, letting him cast it once more. Any attacks that could potentially interrupt his spell-casting were dutifully blocked by Svelte Dancer. The newly formed flame wheel burned brightly as it dove straight down to the ground and cleared out another patch of Mountain Bandits.

When the players saw this, they excitedly called out to Gu Fei as they defended him, "Forget about breaking through; let's just kill all of them!"

"What a great idea!" Gu Fei concurred to these players and flourished his sword with Twin Incineration to kill off a whole row of Mountain Bandits, evidently getting carried away in the process. It was then that he received a message. Opening the message box, he felt surprised to discover that it had been from Vast Lushness: "Hey. It's best if you watch your mana consumption. My mana is about to run out."

Gu Fei dazedly searched for Vast Lushness among the crowd and located her not too far from him. Vast Lushness had also charged in with the melee job classes, yet she had been pointing her holy staff to Gu Fei. When she saw Gu Fei looking at her, she smilingly asked, "Did you really think that you're being freely gifted mana from the gods?"

Although Gu Fei was still clueless about it, he could still feel that Vast Lushness's presence and his constant mana replenishment had a direct correlation. Based on her words, his mana replenishment would not last forever. Hence, he immediately decided to stop squandering the gift.

A saying went: 'Good steel should be used for the blade.' Although Gu Fei thoroughly enjoyed using Twin Incineration to slay foes, he knew that Descending Wheel of Flames was the better choice in the current situation. Reining in his impulse to directly cut people down, he waited for Descending Wheel of Flames' cooldown to end before diligently bombarding the Mountain Bandits.

"Charge, everyone!" Gu Fei pointed for everyone the direction to head over to, as if he were a commander directing his men. What he was truly worried about was meeting the accusing eyes of those who had just suggested to him to butcher all the Mountain Bandits.

Reality proved that the players were not so obstinate. Seeing Gu Fei striving to break through the enemies' encirclement, they also followed suit and carved their way out accordingly.

The players quickly filled the space Gu Fei had emptied by disposing of the throng of Mountain Bandits with his Descending Wheel of Flames.

A breach in the encirclement soon appeared after Gu Fei dropped two more flame wheels. Vast Lushness's mana was already used up by this point, so Gu Fei's supply of mana subsequently halted. His remaining mana was enough to cast Descending Wheel of Flames twice from here on.

All the encircled players were elated; as long as they got out of the encirclement, they would no longer have to fight the Mountain Bandits' attacks while being surrounded on all sides. These level 30 monsters would surely fall under their assault once they properly got in position by the rolling plains ahead.

As everyone was fantasizing about this, the Mountain Bandits suddenly roared. Following their guttural roar, Sooto burst forth, leaped over the players' heads, and landed right before Gu Fei, effectively blocking the players way out.

The players' hearts thumped fast. Did Sooto who had been mainly commanding the Mountain Bandits thus far finally decide to join the fight?

Although Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto's underlings were merely at level 30, it would be fatal to assume that he would be of the same caliber. Sooto could be considered as a quest-specific Boss – a monster that would only appear if players obtained the relevant quest and killed their way through Oolong Cave. Without it, players would only find an empty hut deep in the recesses of Oolong Cave. Everyone was also aware that quest-specific Bosses were far troublesome to deal with than Wild Bosses of the same level.

When two commanders clashed, the underlings would usually stand by the side to cheer and show support accordingly. Sooto's underlings, meanwhile, continued to attack the players even when he came forward. The players continued to fend off the Mountain Bandits, as they felt clueless on how to deal with Sooto.

They were heavily surrounded and were barely holding their own against the swarming monsters; none had a hand to spare to deal with the Boss. Anyway, was a Boss a being any random players could easily deal with? If even players who had made substantial preparations would still die when facing this sort of monsters, what more could be expected from these players that were currently in an unfavorable and chaotic predicament?

As the players anxiously considered if they should disperse themselves, Gu Fei brought his sword before him and charged at the Boss without missing a beat.

“You're insane!” Even Svelte Dancer was shocked by his action.

No matter how indomitable she considered herself to be, she would never think that she had the ability to solo a Boss. Therefore, she did not expect for Gu Fei to actually have the guts to solo a Boss.

“It’s not like it’s my first time facing him; I’m quite familiar with fighting him.” Gu Fei smiled at her before sending a sword slash to Sooto. Sooto reacted exactly like how a Boss would when facing such an attack; he sent out an attack of his own! Shrugging his shoulders capriciously, Sooto moved to unleash his powerful attack – Red Blaze!

Gu Fei vividly recalled his duel with Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto, and the latter’s shoulder movement clued him in on the fact that Sooto was about to unleash his special attack. Although he did not know how powerful Sooto’s special attack was, it had never once hit Gu Fei before!

Moreover, Gu Fei was no longer a level 30 Mage. He had been about even in terms of attack speed with Sooto back then; right now, he was faster than the Boss Sooto. Swiftly extending his hand, Gu Fei was able to send a slash to Sooto before the latter could complete his ultimate move.

Sooto’s ultimate move was unfortunately not a spell, so the Verdict deemed Gu Fei’s slash as insufficient to interrupt the attack. Thankfully, Gu Fei had fast reaction speed. As the huge saber glowing red lashed out, Gu Fei nimbly twisted his body and avoided the move completely. Following this, he heard someone scream from behind him. A random player got hit by that blow instead, dying right there and then.

Actually, these players should have been able to withstand Sooto’s Red Blaze at their current level, yet that player had just been a little unlucky since he no longer had full HP after fighting in the frontline for so long. Without any Priest dedicated to healing the player, death was the only outcome for him after taking that move head on.

“Take care, everyone!” Gu Fei cautioned as he continued to engage Sooto. He could only do this since he did not have a way to stop Sooto from unleashing Red Blaze. Having judged that his Mage character did not have the capacity to endure the Boss’s special attack, he could not possibly offer to block it with his body!

The players could not help but be affected by the sight of the mad person duking it out with the Boss Sooto, causing everyone to lose their minds.

Gu Fei was actually taking on Sooto by himself without appearing to be at a disadvantage. This was only possible because he could avoid every attack of Sooto. All the players could only gawk at the fantastical level of fighting skill that Gu Fei was currently demonstrating.

Chapter 283 - Utterly Despicable and Shameless

Sooto came out to intervene just as the players were about to break out of the encirclement. But to everyone's surprise, Gu Fei turned out to be capable of dealing with Sooto by himself. Still, it was evident that Gu Fei would be unable to quickly deal with Boss Sooto, as the latter was wearing full-body armor this time around.

Many players were currently spread out in a strip that went deep inside the Mountain Bandits' encirclement, and these people were unwilling to relinquish their current position to the enemies despite Sooto blocking their path forward. Thankfully, there were quite a lot of players participating in this battle and the absence of those players that went delving into the enemies' ranks created space for the players behind to fill in. With these players reinforcing the position and holding the line, the Mages could now come forward and find a chance to unleash their spells. Previously, these Mages were worrying about hitting their comrades who had been clashing with the Mountain Bandits by accident from their position behind the Archers.

“Why don't I give it a shot? Just get a few men to protect me as I cast my spell.” Drifting, the publicly recognized number one Mage of Parallel World, confidently held his magic stave aloft. Drifting needed to be in the frontline of this fight for him to kill off swathes of enemies just like Gu Fei. However, in such a chaotic fight and with everyone engaging the Mountain Bandits coming from every direction, the movement of monsters as well as the players could easily interrupt the Mages' spell-casting. Gu Fei could only cast Descending Wheel of Flames boldly because he had the top player in the entire game, Svelte Dancer, protecting him. Besides, the fact that he could take on a Boss by himself without being at a disadvantage attested to his extraordinary fight prowess!

“That...” As Youthful Reflection mulled on how he could form a defensive line at Svelte Dancer’s level for Drifting, Silver Moon suddenly raised his arm, “You three, defend him!”

The three Guardians beside Silver Moon lifted their shields called Bulwark of Imprisonment and jogged toward Drifting.

Drifting was astonished. “Guardians? Will these three be enough to defend me?”

“Don’t worry!” Silver Moon assured Drifting, “They have exceptional defense.”

Drifting plunged right into the enemies’ formation with the three Guardians protecting him. Drifting kept hearing the sounds of attacks hitting the shields, yet the three men remained immovable like mountains, and he was unhampered in the least as he stayed within them.

“Descending Wheel of Flames! Descend!” Drifting finally cast.

None could tell who had a more monstrous Spell Damage between Parallel World’s number one Mage and Gu Fei since Drifting’s Descending Wheel of Flames had the ability to obliterate every Mountain Bandit nearby as well.

Drifting was like an accurate artillery; having invested all his points into Intelligence, he was able to dish out the highest Spell Damage possible each time. Moreover, Drifting’s equipment was focused on increasing either his Intelligence or his magic damage output. Even his top-grade magic staff could release power necessary to kill a lot of level 30 Mountain Bandits. His step-by-step approach in terms of equipment and spell usage let him maintain absolute power. In contrast, Gu Fei was entirely dependent on his two pieces of overleveled equipment; while he possessed incredible might right now, it was only a matter of time before it fade in the face of advancement, be it in gear or skills, as the game progressed further.

Under the three Guardians' impenetrable protection, Drifting could freely unleash his spells. This led to another string of players carving another path out of the blockade. While everyone was admiring Drifting's high Spell Damage, Drifting for his part was feeling awed by the three Guardians' airtight defense. These men did not just have frighteningly high defense; they were extremely good at guarding him as well. The three completely adapted to his fighting tempo, not even bumping into Drifting once as they prevented any attacks from reaching him.

No second Boss appeared to block their path, so this string of players successfully broke through to Youthful Reflection's utter delight. With this path carved out successfully, the players that had been hindered by this mountain range's terrain were now able to head over to the open plains ahead. These players finally experienced the vastness of the plains outside the mountain pass. Everyone fanned out and basically encapsulated the Mountain Bandits in their encirclement this time.

The sound of the ensuing slaughter reverberated in the air! The players had been impatiently watching the fight from afar and had been wishing to lend a hand, but they were blocked by the mountain's terrain. Their thirst for blood had since left them parched. Right now, each of them was bravely engaging the foes with ferocity comparable to the monsters before them.

Dealing with the level 30 Mountain Bandits was already nothing more than child's play to these level 40 players. With the monsters' loss of their terrain advantage, nothing really needed to be said about the eventual result. For fear of the players becoming reckless and suffering unnecessary casualties, Youthful Reflection incessantly reminded them to be careful.

The Mountain Bandits were very quickly disposed of, but the duel between Gu Fei and Sooto appeared to be far from over. Sooto's defense had significantly risen with him wearing clothes. Moonlit Nightfalls' Physical Damage was superficial at best, so Gu

Fei replaced it with Sacred Flames of Baptism after he had cast Twin Incineration twice.

Gouts of flame continued to flare with his Ring of Subdued Lightning proccing from time to time. The electricity that crackled at his blade's sharp edge with his every strike was visually stunning, especially since it was accompanied by the sound effect for thunder. While it was unknown how much damage it dealt, his strike would often cause Sooto to spasm as if he were break-dancing. The players gawked at this; all of them wondered about the sort of weapon Gu Fei's Chinese broadsword was for it to cause such an effect.

Besides Gu Fei's mage robe that was shown with question marks on its description window, they could tell that his other equipment, including the level 30 Sacred Flames of Baptism, was all nothing out of the ordinary! The surrounding players, especially those that liked consistency and disdained anything that bore the term 'chance', had never considered equipment that increased the proc rate of his weapon's additional fire attack to be anything but trivial or impractical in combat.

"OP! He's too d*mn OP!" Since his equipment was nothing short of average, they could only focus on Gu Fei's skillful swordplay. While his swordplay seemed simple with him mainly dodging Sooto's attacks, the players could feel that this was not really the case. They did not know how to describe the scene unfolding before them and could only gawk at the two combatants.

"Uhm... Should we lend a hand?" quite a few men asked, as everyone recalled that Gu Fei was actually fighting a Boss! What sort of gamers would they be if they did not take this chance to steal the Boss kill?

Guttural bellows came from these players. "Quickly assist him!" they gave such a righteous reasoning even as they dove toward the Boss with the intention of stealing it.

Bosses represented a huge chunk of experience points, coin-filled pouches, and the possibility of gold-or purple-tier item drops. With such wondrous rewards, the players abandoned everything from their discipline to their teammates as they rushed toward Sooto as if he were their father.

Gu Fei was actually feeling aggrieved that no player offered to help him when the fighting ebbed, so he promptly felt comforted when many players surged toward him like flowing lava from a volcano that had erupted to provide assistance.

With attacks coming from every direction, Sooto could no longer devote his strikes to Gu Fei like before. Feeling quite bored, he gave Sooto a slash or two before he retreated from the fight while wiping his brows with his sleeves.

The eyeballs of countless players almost fell out of their sockets when they witnessed this. Many of them were feeling distressed at being unable to attack the Boss due to cramped space available for fighting Sooto, so Gu Fei's casual retreat from the frontline as if this did not matter to him filled them with joy.

It was fine if a player could not take advantage of this situation due to his inability to fight the Boss, but Gu Fei was clearly capable of soloing Sooto. To be able to give up this kill... They suddenly felt that this Mage was incomparably noble and outstanding.

The other members of Young Master's Elite made their way over and began lecturing Gu Fei for his action. They knew how different Gu Fei's thought process was compared to the average gamers; he was someone who simply did not care for Boss drops or any potential gains, which explained his readiness to let the others take the kill from him.

Gu Fei listened to their nagging as he ate a banana, saying once he finished, "Reward? Why worry about that?! Anyway, I heard there's a rule where the item that a monster drops will go to the player that deals the most damage; isn't that right?"

They were momentarily stunned by this statement. Brother Assist turned his gaze over to the skirmish, “Hmm... With many people attacking Sooto, it seems it will truly be difficult for any of them to deal more damage than you did. But!” Turning his gaze on Gu Fei once more, Brother Assist quickly added, “That’s only if you are not in the same party! Everyone has already formed a party together, so that rule won’t apply!”

“About that... I didn’t join the party,” Gu Fei admitted.

“You didn’t join the party?!” Everyone was shocked.

“Yeah. I declined the invitation since Silver Moon sent it...” Gu Fei explained.

They had joined the party purely to take advantage of Silver Moon’s King’s Command. His skill could only affect players in the same party, and anyone who was not in the same party as him would be unable to enjoy its effects. When Silver Moon was forming the party for this operation, Gu Fei unhesitatingly rejected his invitation.

Having understood the truth of the situation, the men of Young Master’s Elite could not help but find the players’ desperate attempt to deal damage at Sooto rather comical. Only Brother Assist was still fretting, “Uhm... The person that lands the last attack will also gain ‘priority’. If it happens to be someone of the same party, it is still possible for the team priority to supersede yours!”

“Guess it can’t be helped, then. Who knows when the last hit will land?” Gu Fei helplessly chirped.

“Maybe it’s now.” Royal God Call answered jokingly.

“Is that so?” Gu Fei played along with him. Pulling out Moonlit Nightfalls, he pointed it toward the skirmish and chanted, “Thunderbolt! Strike!” A streak of lightning arced down from the heavens and into the crowd of players, striking Sooto squarely on

his head. The hair upon Sooto's head got fried to crisp, and a puff of wispy smoke lingered on him as he convulsed for the last time in today's fight.

All, including Gu Fei, were dumbfounded and their mouths hung agape. That's really fortunate of me! he muttered to himself.

"Well, the drops will surely belong to you now; no two ways about it," the others said.

"Can't be helped, then," Gu Fei sighed as he squeezed his way into the crowd, asking, "What dropped?"

These players who had wasted their time beating Sooto up glared at the Mage contemptuously, "We've been had! This guy is utterly despicable and shameless!"

Chapter 284 - The Mountain Bandit Leader's Item Drops

Amid the surrounding players fuming at what had just happened, Gu Fei uncaringly rushed forward to pick up the monster loots as he kept on shouting, "Excuse me! Excuse me, please!" And yet, all the players remained in their position as they stared fixedly at the circle within.

While the Boss's underlings were at level 30, Soto himself was beyond that level. Why else would they be struggling to complete the 'Seizing the Mountain Bandit Leader Soto' quest when they were at level 30 if Soto were a level 30 Boss?

Following this logic, Soto's drops should also be on par with his current level. Soto had dropped a money pouch and two pieces of equipment on the ground upon his death, yet the players could only stare longingly at those items since the system was preventing them from picking the loots up. As such, they were possibly experiencing the most excruciating pain any gamer could ever feel.

"Hey! Can you two help me?" Gu Fei asked Oathless Sword and Youthful Reflection, the people in charge of the expedition, for help.

While the two looked serious on the surface, they were actually celebrating Gu Fei's misfortune inside. Still, they could no longer feign ignorance about Gu Fei's plight since he was directly asking them for help. Youthful Reflection showed him a troubled look. "That is... As you can see, it's a little difficult to talk them off...."

Youthful Reflection was actually stalling for time. The system would only prevent items from being picked up by others for a short period of time. Once this time lapsed, anyone could pick the items up. Expecting people to hand over the drops to their owner was just pipe dream in a MMO.

Gu Fei was a straightforward person, though. Upon hearing Youthful Reflection's evasive response, he merely shook his head with a sigh, "Guess it can't be helped."

The two felt delighted when they heard this. This was when a thought flashed through Youthful Reflection's mind, This guy can't possibly be thinking of killing all these people, right? Although they were comrades, that was just for this expedition. In fact, he was holding himself back from moving against Gu Fei whom he considered to be capable of killing others without batting an eye. He would not even be surprised if Gu Fei really did kill the bunch of people before them. Just as he was about to say something, Youthful Reflection saw Gu Fei leap vertically from his current position while pointing toward the crowd, "Translocation! Blink!"

Gu Fei disappeared.

Meanwhile, a bunch of players began to excitedly jostle with one another once they heard that the items' owner was barricaded from penetrating their ranks; all of them salivated at Sooto's corpse as they looked forward to snatching the Boss's item drops. Online games were probably the only places where it was acceptable for people to salivate over a grotesque corpse.

As these men eagerly counted down the seconds that they would be prevented from getting near the item drops and prepared themselves for the fight that was about to occur for the items, a figure blurred into existence before their eyes and instantly stepped onto Sooto's corpse triumphantly.

Many lost their composure in their shock, yet Gu Fei remained uncaring of all this. Laughing at everyone around him, he asked, "What are you guys looking at?" Gu Fei then picked up the coin pouch and two pieces of equipment beside Sooto's corpse under the crowd's agonized gazes.

Sometimes, an in-game item would promptly drop once a

monster was defeated; at other times, it would remain inside the monster's clothes for a player to search himself or herself. The Bosses' corpses would thus often meet quite the terrible fate of being undressed, flipped around, and closely inspected, turning every Boss players defeated into a highly X-rated scene. The players actually wished they could just rip the bodies apart in search of the loot, but the game designs regretfully did not allow such level of gore.

Gu Fei was fortunately not that extreme. Checking Sooto's pockets, he quickly got up after. He did not intend to conduct a thorough search of Sooto's corpse under the crowd's intense scrutiny. He felt the players would end up drowning him in their displeasure if he were to unceremoniously strip the Boss down until nothing was left for even the vultures to scrape at.

"Please let me through!" Gu Fei's smile was still affixed on his face.

The players had no interest in blocking his path this time around. Listlessly clearing a path for him, Gu Fei humbly made his way through the crowd. Halfway out, the system-designated time limit for looting Sooto's corpse expired and it instantly suffered inhumane treatment from the surrounding players. By the time the crowd scattered, the once fearsome Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto had been left sprawling on the ground dressed only in his undergarments with his face on the ground. Suffering such a fate, it was as if the corpse could not wait for the system's white light to collect it.

"What dropped?" many familiar faces immediately asked Gu Fei once he returned to his mercenary group.

Gu Fei tossed the coin pouch to Royal God Call, saying, "Count the content." He then took out the two pieces of equipment he had looted from the Boss.

[Bandit Leader's Ring (Purple Tier)]

+ 12 Strength
+ 12 Agility]

From its name alone, the item could be said to not be meant for Mages. Royal God Call, Svelte Dancer, Sword Demon and even War Without Wounds salivated over this item, yet Gu Fei excitedly replaced the Ring of Flames – which increased additional fire attack proc rate by 7% – for it. He then dangled Ring of Flames to the crowd, “Anyone interested in this?” When no one said a word, Gu Fei took out a similar-looking ring and raised both to them, “They’re a pair!”

“Go to hell!” everyone berated.

The other item he got was not equipment but a permanent skill scroll.

Since Mountain Bandit Leader Sooto was the one that dropped it, it was obviously a thief-related skill. Gu Fei regretfully showed it to everyone.

[Shadow Walk

Effect: Puts the user in an uninterruptible Stealth state that consumes 7% mana every second.

Skill cooldown: 2 minutes and 30 seconds

Job class requirement: Rogue]

“This...” All were in a daze when they saw it.

“Any Rogue around here?” Gu Fei cried out, already looking for a buyer.

“Give it to me!” Svelte Dancer pounced on Gu Fei.

Gu Fei sidestepped her pouncing figure and lifted the scroll up to her, “Cancel my debt to you in exchange for this scroll, then!”

“AHEM!” Brother Assist cleared his throat audibly, but Svelte Dancer unhesitatingly took the skill scroll from Gu Fei’s hand as she rolled her eyes, “Oh, stop with that. I know this Shadow Walk

skill is more valuable than the Blink skill I've given him."

Brother Assist felt slightly embarrassed. He had cleared his throat to signal Gu Fei that he had sent him a message, but it turned out that Svelte Dancer was sincere about the transaction as she did not even attempt to rip Gu Fei off.

The scroll disappeared from Svelte Dancer's hand once she got a hold of it. She then fished out two coin pouches from her dimensional pocket, counted the amount inside, and tossed them over to Gu Fei, "Here are 1500 gold coins. Adding the 1500 gold coins you still owe me, I've essentially bought this skill scroll for 3000 gold coins. You won't be making a loss at this rate, yeah?" She was not looking at Gu Fei when she said this, though; instead, her gaze was on Brother Assist. Brother Assist once more felt sheepish inside and bowed his head in embarrassment.

"I guess so," Gu Fei offhandedly replied as he dropped the coin pouches into his dimensional pocket.

"'Guess so'?! This lady here has actually bought the skill scroll for such a high price, yet that's how you view it?!" Svelte Dancer indignantly yelled and she made it seem as if she would pounce on him once more.

"HIGH PRICE! I mean you paid for it rather generously!" Gu Fei quickly rephrased his statement, not wanting to quarrel with her over it. No one was exactly capable of telling the skill's true worth, yet even he could judge that it was highly valuable. Stealth could be considered as the weakest thief skill; Stealth could easily be interrupted with the slightest touch, but with Shadow Walk that seemed capable of raising the skill's level to near invincibility, Stealth would not be interrupted even if a Thief was under attack or attacking.

Royal God Call and War Without Wounds were green with envy at the sight of Gu Fei pocketing the gold coins and sourly commented, "To think you would accept money from a babe!

Scum!”

“That’s right, you beast!” the second man chimed in.

“Shall we split the gold coins, then?” Gu Fei asked.

The two immediately became elated, “That’s a great idea!”

“Scram! You two are the real scum and beast!” Gu Fei countered.

The brigade’s trek through the Oolong Mountain Range was not yet over. Building bridges on the mountain path as well as overcoming that large-scale surprise attack, Gu Fei had truly made substantial contributions in this portion of the mission. While Drifting was the one that had managed to penetrate the Mountain Bandits’ blockade, Gu Fei’s effort of soloing Sooto was undeniably what had allowed Drifting to escape the fate of being diced into pieces by the Mountain Bandit Leader.

The players were of course aware of this, but Gu Fei’s act of pocketing almost all of Sooto’s dropped items made all their feelings of gratitude toward him disappear altogether. Each of them was even fervently praying that he would meet a tragic end.

As they exited the mountain pass and stepped on to the rolling plains ahead, the large group of players could vaguely make out the outline of Yueye City in the horizon. Everyone sighed in relief; this expedition’s first part was finally over. As for what sort of benefit they gained from this... All the players could only send another round of curses toward Gu Fei.

Yueye City! Emotions welled up within Gu Fei, yet June’s Rain was actually more excited than him. Having stayed longer in Yueye City than Gu Fei, she was more familiar with this region’s customs and terrain than him. Spotting a few players ahead, June’s Rain immediately covered her face with a piece of cloth from her dimensional pocket.

“Xiaoyu, what are you doing?” a lady asked her out of curiosity.

“Everyone around here does this,” June’s Rain replied generally.

The others were still puzzled by her answer, so they requested for her to explain further, yet June's Rain was unable to give a clear reason for this action and could only say that this was what the locals did.

Gu Fei remembered the last time he had been here; indeed, men wearing face covers had attempted to rob him, yet saying that 'everyone' did this would be a little far-fetched.

Everyone could still not make sense of this and merely continued forward. Soon, they entered the grinding map before them. Looking around, they saw that all the players in the area were indeed covering their faces just like June's Rain.

"Just what is going on?" Everyone found this comical. When the masked players saw the large group of men appear from somewhere, they all stopped what they were doing. Several of them even began retreating while others anxiously whispered to one another.

"What's happening? Why are there suddenly so many people here?"

"F*ck! Does that trash have such a strong backer? We're in deep sh*t now."

"To mobilize such a behemoth army, is that kid someone from the Ten Guild Alliance?"

"I don't remember seeing that kid wear an emblem or anything!"

"F*ck! Did he act weak to make us lose our guard? We're dead meat!"

"But these guys don't seem to be wearing the Ten Guild Alliance's emblem, either!"

"M*th*r f*ck*r! Who else could muster such a huge army besides the Ten Guild Alliance?! Let's just make ourselves scarce!"

In a short while, plenty of players vanished from the grinding

map. Seeing the plains before them suddenly become empty, the players from Yunduan City were immediately taken aback. This was in stark contrast with the fevered competition going on in many of Yunduan City's grinding maps.

Each of them was simply dumbfounded by this. Finally, Traversing Four Seas' three core members spoke up, "Gentlemen, it's getting pretty late. Let's not tarry here and quickly enter the city! For the mercenaries, please remember to record your character data over by Yueye City. As for the remuneration for this quest's portion, we'll discuss it first thing tomorrow morning!"

"Oathless big bro..." a mercenary spoke up, "Just what sort of item are you guys escorting for this quest? After traveling so far, I've yet to spot any item that fits the criterion of being the object escorted by us...."

Chapter 285 - When in Rome...

All these mercenaries were knowledgeable when it came to quests and missions; they knew that an escort mission would usually have an item that could not fit into a player's dimensional pocket, requiring the players to manually carry, bear, or lift it to the destination. The point was that it had to be carried openly.

So far, not one of them had seen an item that fit this criterion among the 'Traversing Four Seas' players. Nevertheless, this quest's validity could not be denied; the Mountain Bandits and Robbers' ambush near Oolong Cave, the system-formed crevasses on the mountain path, and Boss Sooto's appearance near the end of the Oolong Mountain Range... These situations that players would usually not bump into were clearly triggered by Traversing Four Seas' guild quest.

After reaching their first stopover, someone could no longer hold in his curiosity and voiced it out. He believed that his question was sound, yet the players around were unexpectedly gazing at him rather peculiarly. The man felt aggrieved; although his comrades often called him an idiot, he considered his question to be quite clever, and he could not fathom what was wrong with it no matter how hard he thought. Amid this man's puzzlement, Oathless Sword laughingly told him, "Man, your mercenary leader must not have joined the meeting this morning, or perhaps he forgot to inform you?"

"Mercenary leader?" the man asked, confused. The term sounded foreign to his ears, and it took him quite a while to register its meaning. He turned his gaze over to Sakurazaka Moony, their so-called 'mercenary leader'. Unfortunately for the man, Sakurazaka Moony was entirely occupied with sticking as close as possible to Vast Lushness to care even a whit about his predicament. No one bothered to supply him with information about the matter either, with everyone merely continuing toward Yueye City.

The players from Yunduan City that had never been to this region before soon became well-acquainted with Yueye City's local customs. In the short distance that they had traveled toward the city, they witnessed five separate group PvP's and seventeen duels – these excluded the fights happening further away for them to assess.

This local custom that was steeped in unbridled aggression left the players from Yunduan City tongue-tied. They were now even starting to understand why many players in this region were keeping their faces covered. Just from the twenty-two fights that they had witnessed along the way, seven occurred despite the players' faces being covered. They even heard some of those involved shout, "Even if you turned gray and old, I'd still recognize you!" before clashing with one another. Funnily enough, there were instances when the pieces of cloth that these combatants were using to cover their faces would fall off during the fight, which would then cause all the combatants to freeze up. Cursing at one another, they would then demand, "Who the f*ck are you?!" Instead of reaching a peaceful resolution, the combatants would just cover their faces once more before continuing their fights. It was as though even when their old animosity remained unfinished, new adversaries were made... Every Yueye City player persisted in PvPing until the very end.

Those hailing from Yunduan City were experienced gamers themselves, and they watched these fights with awe and wonder. As for those hailing from Yueye City, when they saw the large throng of players walking by, they would immediately give them a wide berth, opting to warily observe the procession from afar.

Meanwhile, the people part of the expedition were currently discussing about what they had just witnessed on their respective channels. Those who had been to Yueye City before, like Gu Fei and the rest of Young Master's Elite, were discussing how the local customs had evolved since their last visit to the region; Will-low,

June's Rain, and those that had actually stayed in the city for a long while were feeling nostalgia over their return to familiar grounds; finally, Silver Moon, Vast Lushness, and those who had quite the history in Yueye City performed different actions. Silver Moon somehow acquired himself a piece of cloth to cover his face, while Vast Lushness, who was originally part of Silver Moon's former Past Deeds Guild, merely continued to walk toward the city with her face exposed.

The players in the expedition soon found themselves standing right before one of Yueye City's gates. Oathless Sword stepped forward and addressed everyone for the last time today, "This will do for tonight! Please arrive at seven o'clock sharp tomorrow night right on this spot. I believe none of you will have problems with that!"

The players gave an affirmative answer and dispersed into the city after.

While Traversing Four Seas chose to start the guild quest's journey daily in accordance with the same primetime period that the game officials had used for the just-ended PvP tournaments, this was not the only time many of these players played the game. Besides Gu Fei, the others in Young Master's Elite pretty much lived their lives inside Parallel World. Arriving at Yueye City, plenty of these players would continue to play the game even with the mission temporarily on hold.

But seeing that Yueye City was not a peaceful region, these players did not immediately engage themselves in activities like what they would do if they were in Yunduan City. Even the five experts of Young Master's Elite seriously discussed where they would grind on monsters or do quests.

"Miles, what about you?" the five men asked Gu Fei on the mercenary channel.

"I'm logging off," Gu Fei replied.

The five were already expecting his response, so they did not speak further about the matter. Most of the players playing Parallel World would log off at a set time like Gu Fei, but the expedition members happened to be made up of those that would grind their levels whenever they had time. Within this thousand-man army, those that had a fixed log-off time were in the minority. Gu Fei and the many Amethyst Rebirth ladies belonged to this group.

While the others were busy asking around for the nearest log-off point, Gu Fei and the ladies had the privilege of being guided by June's Rain and Will-low to a safe zone.

June's Rain happily took this role of guiding the 'foreigners' to a spawn point. Will-low, for her part, was more reserved despite actually being a past resident of Yueye City; her gaze was locked toward a direction as she silently took out a dagger from her dimensional pocket and activated Stealth. Someone lightly patted her shoulder as she took a step forward, canceling her Stealth as a corollary. Will-low irately turned to look behind her. It was Gu Fei.

"What are you trying to do?" Gu Fei asked with a smile.

Will-low used her eyes to do the talking. Gu Fei followed her gaze that landed on Vast Lushness, who was blankly standing by the side of the street.

"My friends in Yueye City told me that Silver Moon and Vast Lushness have disappeared here. I didn't expect for them to turn up in Yunduan City," Will-low spat with vitriol, adding, "I should've thought of this. Since Silver Moon turned up in Yunduan City, why wouldn't she be there, too?"

Silver Moon's name had spread in Yunduan City after his performance in the mercenary PvP tournament, yet Will-low only had discord with Vast Lushness, so Will-low only cared about her. Although Vast Lushness had maintained a low profile in Yunduan City, she had come into contact with the Amethyst Rebirth ladies

before. Why did Will-low not know this, though?

Puzzled, Gu Fei asked her about it. This caused Will-low to express her shock, “When was this?!”

“It’s when we grinded levels together... on the second day!” Gu Fei reminded her.

“That day, huh...” Will-low recalled before jolting to attention, “I was sick that day! In fact, I didn’t log on for several days!”

“Oh...” Gu Fei also remembered. Will-low had indeed been feeling sick to the point of falling down with the slightest tap when she had gone to log off prior to that fateful day.

“That explains why you didn’t know...” Gu Fei gave Will-low an overview of Vast Lushness and Silver Moon’s situation that had led to their arrival to Yunduan City.

Will-low was truly clueless as to what had transpired that day. Silver Moon and Vast Lushness’s matter had been discussed by the ladies for several days after, yet Will-low had coincidentally been offline on those days. When she got online, the matter was no longer a hot topic for the ladies to discuss. Thus, Will-low remained in the dark about the whole matter and only learned of Silver Moon’s arrival to Yunduan City when his mercenary group garnered the public’s attention. Today was also the first time she had seen Vast Lushness; Will-low had actually been pondering on how to go about dealing with Vast Lushness during their entire trip to Yueye City.

Hearing Gu Fei’s recount of Vast Lushness and Silver Moon’s story, Will-low felt rather sympathetic toward Vast Lushness. She now found Silver Moon to be extremely detestable, especially since Gu Fei had vast knowledge of his bad deeds that were unknown to the ladies. Still, the fact that she had enmity with Vast Lushness remained true; it was simply not easy to let go of such a deep grudge after clashing verbally and physically many times before.

Will-low gripped her dagger tightly, unable to make a decision.

“Actually, taking her down now may not be as easy as you think! Do you see that guy next to her?” Gu Fei asked.

“Yes...” Will-low’s voice was dripping with contempt. There was no way she would miss Sakurazaka Moony bouncing up and down beside Vast Lushness during their journey to Yueye City.

“Although that guy looks and acts deplorable, he’s actually a skilled gamer,” Gu Fei said, adding, “Those guys with him are also veteran gamers.”

“What a reprehensible lot. Hmph! Birds of the same feather really flock together!” Will-low had an utterly repulsive impression of Vast Lushness’s character, so it was not surprising for her to fling all sorts of insults regarding the latter. Just as she finished criticizing the men with Vast Lushness, someone from the lewd bunch happened to look over and called out, “Drunk bro!”

Will-low curiously eyed Gu Fei, who was currently feeling very embarrassed. Was he included in this flock of birds, then?

The atmosphere between them suddenly turned awkward and uncertain. This was when Sakurazaka Moony bounded toward them, with Fireball and the others flanking his sides. Wagglng their eyebrows, they silently expressed their admiration for Gu Fei’s ability to easily find a babe to accompany him wherever he went.

“Drunk bro, what plans do you have for tonight?” Fireball asked.

“I’m about to log off,” Gu Fei answered.

“Logging off now?!” Everyone was shocked. Does maintaining similar gaming schedule help earn these ladies’ affection? These lewd men began analyzing Gu Fei’s pick-up techniques in great detail.

Gu Fei did not know that these deplorable men were currently discussing about him on their mercenary channel as he lamented

their inability to perceive the tension pervading the air due to their presence. Will-low was still holding her dagger tightly as she hatefully glared at Vast Lushness. Vast Lushness silently looked at Gu Fei and Will-low.

Sparks flew when the two ladies' eyes met, yet the lewd men remained oblivious to all this as they discussed the various pick-up techniques they knew of. This entire scene was astounding in itself!

“Have fun playing, then; we’re gonna log off first!” Gu Fei moved to drag Will-low with him.

Will-low sighed and did not resist his pull. Just from Gu Fei forcibly canceling her Stealth and telling her of Vast Lushness and Silver Moon’s issue, she could tell that he had been trying to dissuade her from acting. Whether she accepted his explanation or not, she had no wish to reject his thoughtfulness and could only reluctantly give up her attempt to take Vast Lushness’s life. Next time, then! Will-low thought to herself as she departed with Gu Fei.

Chapter 286 - No End to Hatred

Although he had departed with the temporarily appeased Will-low, Gu Fei did not forget about the men he had left behind and sent Sakurazaka Moony this message: “You know that you guys are in danger, right?”

“What? Why?” Sakurazaka Moony asked, puzzled.

“Vast Lushness... She has plenty of enemies here in Yueye City,” Gu Fei explained.

“That’s great, then! I’ll protect her!” Sakurazaka Moony was clearly excited, treating this as a chance for him to perform favorably before her.

“It’s way more than what you imagined!” Gu Fei was tempted to leave Sakurazaka Moony to his devices right now.

“How many are we talking about here exactly?” Sakurazaka Moony finally perceived Gu Fei’s serious tone.

“About the same amount of people playing in Yunduan City in the open beta days!” Gu Fei gave him a conservative estimate. It was in Parallel World’s open beta that Past Deeds had terrorized Yueye City with its tyrannical ways, so those who had joined after its official release could not possibly have bad blood with her. Gu Fei did not get a reply this time, only hearing a cry in the distance “Hey, Moony! What’s the matter with you!”

“Take care, then!” He sent Sakurazaka Moony this final message before logging off from the spawn point with Will-low.

Sakurazaka Moony’s band of brothers shouted at him for a while before he finally returned to his senses. His eyes that gazed at Vast Lushness were now filled with worship. To actually offend an entire city of players just like that... if not a ‘legend’, what else would she be?

Vast Lushness was also looking at Sakurazaka Moony and

company with a smile on her lips, “Have fun playing; I’ll be logging off first.”

Sakurazaka Moony felt stunned. Despite Vast Lushness being a woman, she was a MMO addict, just like the rest of them, that would play Parallel World until the wee hours daily. And yet, she was saying that she would log off early tonight....

Sakurazaka Moony might be a reprehensible man, but he was no moron. He could guess the meaning behind her action. Framing her gesture in a favorable light, he felt completely touched. Sakurazaka Moony wanted to hug her right there and then, yet he did not have the guts to do so.

“I’m off!” Vast Lushness waved goodbye to the Forever in Flowers’ men before turning to make her way toward a log-off point alone.

Sakurazaka Moony dazedly gaze at her departing figure for quite a while. Waking up from his reverie, he hurriedly chased after her, “I’ll walk you over!”

“No need!” Vast Lushness dissuaded.

“No, I insist. What if along the way...” Sakurazaka Moony did not finish his words, but he knew that Vast Lushness got his meaning.

Vast Lushness did not comment on this, nor did she reject his offer. Showing their backs to Fireball and the gang, they quietly departed from the location.

“Putting your lady up on a pedestal; Moony... You’re the one I model my life after!” These guys sighed in adulation.

“G*dd*mm*t! Why is the sleazy Moony able to get himself a girl, while not one woman out there notices my charming self?!” some of them questioned the empty space, feeling disgruntled.

“We gotta work hard, then; it’s rare for us to find ourselves somewhere new. Time to lay the groundwork!”

“Lay, my *ss! Practically all the players are covering their faces here; we can’t even tell if the women are real ‘babes’!”

“Ahh! That’s a serious problem, indeed!” This group of men suddenly felt depressed.

“Actually, we’ll only stay here for a day, so let’s not be too serious about this and just enjoy ourselves,” someone suggested.

“That makes total sense,” the others agreed.

“Viable targets spotted ahead!” one of them suddenly announced as he lifted his hand to point forward. In front, three women with faces covered were gracefully walking down the street.

All of them turned their gaze over and began to critique, “Since we can’t see their faces, let’s focus on their three sizes, instead!”

“These three ain’t bad!”

“So what are we waiting for?!”

“Let’s go!” These men thus began their hunting and teasing activities....

Gu Fei went online earlier than usual the next day. It was not every day that he got to visit Yueye City, so he did not wish to waste time. In a city where PvP was the norm, he was already expecting for the Bounty Assignment Hall to be filled with people. What made this place more beautiful was that despite the players’ equipment being average at best, their PvP standard was definitely topnotch.

Gu Fei was just about to joyfully make his way over to the Bounty Assignment Hall when he received a bombardment of messages. Gu Fei pulled out his inbox and saw that the culprit turned out to be Fireball: “Drunk bro, save me!”

Fireball’s steady stream of terse messages clued Gu Fei in about the urgency of his friend’s situation. Actually, Gu Fei already had a hunch that something like this might happen. “What’s the matter?

Are you being hunted?”

“How did you know that?!” Fireball asked, surprised. Time and time again, Gu Fei had challenged his cognition of things.

“Didn’t I already tell Moony for you guys to be more vigilant here?” Gu Fei asked, instead.

Fireball, who was currently being hunted, naturally knew of the whole story behind his situation and could only tearfully say, “The two have actually gone to log off last night, yet they were blocked by people along the way.”

Sakurazaka Moony had accompanied Vast Lushness to the spawn point to log off last night, yet Vast Lushness’s notoriety turned out to be pretty severe and people were already on to her. Seeing that she was about to reach a spawn point, the local players gathered their comrades to block the spawn point and prevent her from logging off.

It had been quite some time since Vast Lushness left Yueye City, so their hatred for her should not have been as severe as before. However, Dusky Cloud’s recent visit to Yunduan City to participate in Gu Fei’s meet and greet had ended in a disastrous note with him encountering and getting killed by Silver Moon’s trap for Young Master’s Elite.

Dusky Cloud was considered the overlord in Yueye City. It had been a long time since he suffered such a loss and it only served to rekindle his bad blood with the pair. At the time, he had to put his revenge on hold since the PvP tournaments were underway. Now that Parallel World’s PvP events had ended, this issue once more resurfaced as one of the important matters for them to deal with.

Silver Moon could no longer survive in Yueye City, so he had to leave for Yunduan City and begin anew. Meanwhile, Dusky Cloud’s friend in Yunduan City, No Smile, and a few others traveled over to Yueye City to attach themselves to him after encountering heavy setbacks in Yunduan City. If Dusky Cloud previously had

informants in Yunduan City, he no longer had that anymore. Therefore, he was absolutely clueless about Silver Moon's progress with his mercenary group. But from the ambush that day, it was apparent that Silver Moon had quite a few men at his disposal. This caused Dusky Cloud to be uncertain on how many men he should mobilize to take down Silver Moon. He was afraid that they would be unable to get the job done if he mistakenly sent insufficient men or that they would create misunderstandings with Yunduan City's players if he sent too many men. Silver Moon was a devious person that could rouse external forces to his cause, so Dusky Cloud could not afford to be careless regarding him.

When he finally sent several men to gather intel, they actually returned to Yueye City halfway. They stated that parts of the road leading toward Yunduan City were eroded, making crossing them impossible.

Only the system was capable of making major changes in Parallel World's terrain, so Dusky Cloud could only shelve his plan to deal with Silver Moon for now. His time had been occupied with researching the 'guild quest' reward for placing first in the guild versus guild tournament these past few days, so they only started their hunt for Vast Lushness when someone claimed to have spotted her in Yueye City.

By the time Gu Fei got online, Sakurazaka Moony, Vast Lushness, Fireball, and friends had been on the run for an entire day and night. Fortunately, Vast Lushness had plenty of experience evading pursuers in Yueye City, so she was well-versed in using the winding backstreets to lose their hunters. They also managed to drag things out until now with the use of the expert trappers in Sakurazaka Moony's mercenary group.

Unfortunately, their pursuers had the foresight to block off all the spawn points and Yueye City's gates, preventing them from logging off or leaving the city. Their pursuers even went as far as to request all the players passing through to remove the pieces of

cloth covering their faces for inspection. No one dared to oppose their request since the men were from the Ten Guild Alliance. Vast Lushness was not someone whom the people in Yueye City were very fond of at any rate, so many of the players were more than happy to comply with the men's request after hearing the reason behind it.

"We'll forcefully log off if this continues; I'm pooped," Fireball sent Gu Fei this message.

"Where are you now?" Gu Fei asked.

Fireball told him his coordinates, "Drunk bro, it's up to you now to carve out an escape for us!"

"He he!" Gu Fei merely chuckled as he readied his equipment. Adopting the local customs, Gu Fei took out a piece of cloth and covered his face. He then ran toward the coordinates Fireball had given him.

"Hit me up if your location changes," Gu Fei messaged Fireball.

Fireball did not reply, as he and company were once more engaging the enemies in a fight. The Great Hunting mercenary group was merely made up of the Forever in Flowers Guild's players – just like how Four Seas mercenary group was purely made up of the Traversing Four Seas Guild's players – and was only at level 2 with forty members. All of them had joined this mission, yet they were now down to just eighteen men; the other twenty-two were killed off and sent back to a spawn point, so they naturally logged off and went to sleep.

"Quickly run!" Vast Lushness led the way after the others finished setting up their traps. Sakurazaka Moony glanced over to his remaining men and spotted Fireball, "How curious... We've already lost twenty-two men, yet you're still with us."

Escape would not be difficult if there were just Sakurazaka Moony and his Hunters. Since Fireball and Vast Lushness were

with them, they could only stall for time using their traps. Sakurazaka Moony and his men heard their enemies' exclamations as they stepped on to their traps. Sakurazaka Moony realized how easy it was to trap their pursuers due to the popularity of confrontational approach in Yueye City, which resulted into the locals disdaining this sort of passive attacking method. Few people trained the Hunting Trap skill in Yueye City, so their pursuers barely had any contact with it during PvP, with some not even seeing the skill in action at all. Sakurazaka Moony was baffled when the moronic White Leaf Plumage had actually placed his trap onto sandstone once, yet someone had still managed to step on it.

“Oh, no!” Vast Lushness cried out, saying, “Where’s the rest of the road?!” She bewilderedly looked around her, realizing that she had brought everyone toward a dead end. “This alley is supposed to have an exit. Did it change, or did I remember it wrongly?” Vast Lushness had been away from Yueye City for so long that her confidence in her navigating skills in it wavered.

“D*mm*t! Guess we gotta fight to the death, then,” Sakurazaka Moony resolutely led his men to retrace their steps as there were traps ahead. Since their enemies were chasing them from two different directions, they were officially out of options.

“Drunk bro, we’re current at XXX,XXX... We’re trapped!” Fireball anxiously sent Gu Fei this message.

“Eh? What a coincidence; I happen to pass by that spot!” Gu Fei replied.

Chapter 287 - The Convulsing Guardians

Fireball hurriedly looked around for Gu Fei's figure, but he did not spot him at all. Instead, he saw their enemies appear from two different directions of the junctions, meeting at this alley's entryway. Agonized groans could be heard from his comrades, "We're surrounded again!"

The man next to Fireball cursed out loud, "Ugh! Stop your moaning; it's not like you're a woman; hearing a grown man cry out like that is just plain gross!"

"Enough prattling! Fire!" Sakurazaka Moony ordered aloud. Seeing that they could no longer escape, they decided to drag down as many enemies as they could into their graves.

A salvo of Archers' arrows in an enclosed alley was extremely deadly, as they were nearly impossible to dodge in the cramped space; two enemy players by the alley entrance were shot several times by the first wave of arrows, so they died very quickly.

Yueye City's players were made tougher by their constant PvPing, though, and despite suffering Sakurazaka Moony and company's traps and arrow attacks, they remained unfazed. Several enemy Guardians held shields before them and came to the forefront as their teammates began to huddle behind the shields.

"Advance!" a voice commanded, and the enemies pushed forward while remaining hidden behind the shields. Sakurazaka Moony and company's volley of arrows caused plenty of enemies to be engulfed in white lights; unfortunately, those white lights were not the result of the enemies dying but rather the enemy Priests tirelessly bestowing Heal on their comrades.

"Fireball, what are you doing?!" Sakurazaka Moony demanded. Most Guardians possessed high physical defense and low magic defense, so while the Archers' attacks could only deal minimal damage to them, the Mages' spells could deal substantial damage to

them. Fireball was the only Mage in Sakurazaka Moony's team right now, yet he was actually looking around them instead of attacking the enemies accordingly.

"What can I do by myself, anyway?!" Fireball grimaced. He cast Burning Tree of a Thousand Inferno on the enemies, and just as he had thought, the damage dealt by his spell was hardly significant. The enemy Priests merely continued bestowing Heal through the damage as they advanced toward them.

"Concentrate your firepower on the person at the leftmost side!" Sakurazaka Moony commanded his men with a wave of his hand.

Actually, firing a steady stream of arrows to these enemies was futile. The enemies had already squeezed themselves into this dead-end alley, and the Guardians were only tanking their attacks so as to reduce their casualties. Sakurazaka Moony and gang would probably be annihilated even if their enemies rushed toward them butt naked.

"Forget it. Death it is, then. I'm so exhausted that death now means being able to log off and get some sleep to me." One of Sakurazaka Moony's teammates yawned, lazily firing off another arrow.

"Useless!" Sakurazaka Moony eyed the person with disdain.

Fireball tossed two more spells, yet they were as good as nothing. Seeing the enemies closing in on them, he could only sigh to the heavens, "Drunk bro, didn't you say you are nearby?! Where the heck are you?!"

"Over here!" Gu Fei's voice came from above, followed by a streak of lightning that weaved itself into an electric web, which entangled the Guardians' shields protecting the Ten Guild Alliance's men that were gleefully rushing forward.

A thunderous sound followed!

The row of Guardians sizzled like raw steak on a teppanyaki grill

and smoke visibly rose from within their armor while they were relentlessly getting electrocuted. The sight of the Guardians wreathing in blue and yellow bolts of electricity until their lips quivered and convulsed frightened those following behind them. Someone attempted to pull the affected players out, yet another player with common sense swatted his hand away, saying, “Don’t! It’s electricity!”

“What do we do now?”

“We need to use an insulator!” Being a Thief and all, the man was able to pull out an item that every Thief had: a wooden baton for executing the Bludgeon skill. This person then found purchase in the shield arm of the Guardian before him.

The man looked over, his lips violently quivering the words: “F – F*ck off!”

“What’s going on?” Everyone was at a loss. They were afraid of getting electrocuted as well if they pulled the people off the web of electricity with their hands, yet they also knew that using an insulated wooden baton could not save the Guardians at all. This was the hardship that came along with researching unknown skills and spells.

“There’s a time limit for every spell, so perhaps we can wait this one out!” someone suggested.

The whole row of twitching Guardians looked backward in unison and cursed the man through trembling lips, “Mo – M*th*rf*ck*r!”

“Where did this spell come from, anyway?” Someone proposed looking for the spell-caster to punish the Mage accordingly.

Everyone looked around, with some gazing upward. Those that looked up spotted Gu Fei on a rooftop, wielding a purple sword, with a piece of cloth tied over his face, wearing a black mage robe....

Why does this person's getup and demeanor seem awfully familiar? Some of those who had participated in the guild war back then between Past Deeds Eradication Army and Past Deeds Guild could not help but have this thought.

As they were feeling uncertain, one of them suddenly felt heat rise from beneath his feet... "Is it Burning Tree of a Thousand Inferno again? Priests!"

It was indeed Burning Tree of a Thousand Inferno!

However, this time, Fireball was not the one that had cast it but Gu Fei.

The man who had called for a Priest died the moment the flames rose. The part of the alley where the Ten Guild Alliance's players were occupying suddenly turned into a burning hive that rapidly took their lives even as it grew in intensity in the spaces vacated by the insta-killed players.

"Ah!" someone screamed.

Although this Burning Tree of a Thousand Inferno did not eliminate players the way Descending Wheel of Flames had had outside the Mage Academy of Yueye City back then, quite a lot of the present players were reminded of that memorable scene.

Yueye City was filled with skilled PvPers, yet none of them had seen another Mage that could insta-kill players ever since that event back then as they grinded their way from level 30 to 40, leaving a deep impression on everyone.

Fireball took this chaotic moment to literally fan the flames by casting his Blazing Tree of a Thousand Inferno right before Gu Fei's spell duration ended.

Although the difference in the two's Magic Attack Power was like day and night, those players that were on the brink of death after surviving Gu Fei's spell were still eliminated by Fireball's spell.

"Retreat!" someone hollered. Burning Tree of a Thousand

Inferno was still burning, and the danger it posed was something that these men could not ignore.

These men retreated, leaving behind the row of Guardians that was still convulsing inside the Electric Wall. Gu Fei glanced at the time; Electric Wall could last up to twenty seconds; this lot had been convulsing for six seconds so far.

In retrospect, when Gu Fei had cast this spell on a street in Yunduan City, a few players that had touched its surface were able to retract their fingers upon contact, and none of them was held in place. Why was it that these Guardians....

Is this the result of their increased surface contact? Gu Fei ruminated. These Guardians had their entire shields stuck within the Electric Wall – the surface area that came into contact with the electricity was significantly larger than mere fingers.

However, Electric Wall's damage output was truly insignificant. These Guardians were being electrocuted by the wall of electricity all this while, but not one of them died from it yet. Gu Fei lamented this fact, even as his mana started recovering just like what had happened during his fight with the Mountain Bandits yesterday. Looking down the street, he expectedly spotted Vast Lushness with her raised holy staff pointing toward him!

The Ten Guild Alliance's men were already out of Burning Tree of a Thousand Inferno's AOE; the enemy Priests were rushing to rescue their comrades from death, while the Mages and Archers began hurtling attacks toward Gu Fei.

Gu Fei sprinted away, dodging the balls of fire of Repeating Fireball as he batted arrows with Homing Projectile away. With a quick lift of his finger, he disappeared from his current spot.

These players from Yueye City were naturally unaware of Gu Fei possessing the advance mage spell, Translocation: Blink, so each of them felt stunned when they witnessed his sudden disappearance before their eyes. Gu Fei had already reappeared right before them,

yet these men were still looking for traces of him on the rooftop. Gu Fei slashed around him with Twin Incineration, and a circle of enemies fell.

Electric Wall's duration finally ended, and when the row of Guardians stopped convulsing, silence descended on them. Several men deeply sighed in relief, wanting to bawl their eyes out after such a harrowing experience. Sakurazaka Moony ordered his men to begin their assault once he saw that the enemy Guardians had survived Electric Wall.

Although these battle-hardened players were being thoroughly electrocuted moments ago, they also realized that their targets were near them and were mainly made up of Archers. These men knew that although they were just Guardians, they were more than capable of taking these Archers down as long as they got into melee range. With such a thought in mind, these Guardians raised their shields – and since they no longer had anyone behind them to protect – hunched their backs, and leaned forward, getting in position to activate their Charge skill and dive right into the enemies' formation.

However, these Guardians only managed to raise their posterior and were not able to charge forward. Puzzled, they checked their status window and cursed aloud in unison, “F*ck! We're paralyzed!”

Arrows rained on them and struck their shields, causing the sound of clashing metal to reverberate. Fireball even made a grand show of casting spell on them.

Without any Priests to support them and being unable to use Charge to close in on the Archers, these Guardians did not dare to creep forward like what they had done before as they quickly backed to beat a hasty retreat. They only managed to take a few steps back when they heard crackling sound behind them. Turning to look, they trembled in terror. Another Electric Wall was erected right behind them.

Gu Fei disappeared with a swish from within the enemies' formation. Before these Guardians could react, fiery flames blazed on them—Gu Fei had appeared behind them and gifted them a sword slash powered by Twin Incineration.

No matter how much armor these Guardians equipped, there was still a limit to the amount of HP they possessed. They had survived all the accumulated damage dealt to them throughout this fight, but Gu Fei's Twin Incineration, which held unsurpassable power that could easily insta-kill players, was the straw that broke the camel's back. They were unable to withstand his final assault and died with tears flooding their eyes.

“Are you guys alright?” Gu Fei turned to address Sakurazaka Moony and company after killing the enemy men.

“We're fine; what could that handful of players do to us, anyway?” Sakurazaka Moony boasted, downplaying Gu Fei's timely aid.

“Drunk bro, the enemies look like they're about to run away; quickly show them your indomitable prowess!” Fireball said.

The enemies were indeed dispersing, yet Gu Fei merely shook his head, “Let them leave; I'm currently outta mana.” With that, he addressed Vast Lushness next, “Seems like I didn't recover as much mana as yesterday!”

She replied helplessly, “You left my casting range when you charged far ahead.”

“Oh...” Gu Fei felt dejected for a bit. He then asked, “What's this skill called?”

“Mana Sacrifice. It gifted my mana for you to use,” Vast Lushness answered.

“Oh...” Gu Fei hummed in acknowledgement. Carefully looking at her eyes, he commented, “You seem to be in quite a good mood.”

Chapter 288 - Giving Face to Gu Fei

The smile currently on Vast Lushness's face seemed to come from the heart, which made Gu Fei think that she was in a good mood.

This was ironic. To be capable of smiling sincerely in the face of such a relentless hunt that lasted for an entire day and night... Had she gone insane? Gu Fei had never seen Vast Lushness smile like this before. When they first met in Yueye City, her lips were curled in arrogance and tyranny, and when they met again in Yunduan City... Vast Lushness did not smile much beyond the few perfunctory smiles that were superficial at best and were obviously not heartfelt.

With Gu Fei's comment, Sakurazaka Moony and his lot also came to this realization, especially Sakurazaka Moony. He had stuck his neck out for Vast Lushness so much that he had managed to get in contact with her more often than Gu Fei had, fostering a deeper relationship that allowed him see that Vast Lushness's current smile was indeed far from the usual ones she showed. Furthermore, this smile of hers had appeared repeatedly throughout this day and night.

Sakurazaka Moony suddenly felt fuzzy inside. He could not help but ask, "You've been smiling like that this whole time. What are you happy about?"

"Really? I'm smiling?" Vast Lushness smiled coquettishly.

Everyone was speechless.

"Forget it. Let's just get outta here!" Gu Fei said.

Now that Electric Wall had completely disappeared, the remaining enemies were clamoring to return to this alley from the left and right streets leading to it. The Ten Guild Alliance's men had not actually retreated fully and had just temporarily halted their assault due to the troublesome Gu Fei's appearance. Knowing

that this was a dead-end alley, they decided to wait it out at the two entryways leading to the lane. These men perked up once their targets walked out of the alley. Simultaneously, one of them was spamming the guild channel with: “27149! 27149 is back!”

That was the name that the Ten Guild Alliance had given to the player who had helped them win the guild war against the Past Deeds Guild. Eventually, Dusky Cloud and his brothers had amassed a large number of men to the point that even the highest level guild out there would be unable to contain them. These men were actually from different guilds to begin with, and it was only the existence of Past Deeds Guild during Parallel World’s open beta that had forced them to band together.

Although they had since decimated Past Deeds, the brotherhood that they had found in one another did not end like that. They still considered one another as comrades and had even continued to lead their respective guilds together, eventually forming the current Ten Guild Alliance. Despite the system not having any way to guarantee their bond, they were still able to maintain the friendship that they had fostered all this while.

Still, the lack of an effective way to disseminate information to all the ten guilds in the alliance was truly a huge hassle. Just the “27149! 27149 is back!” cry was broadcasted several times on the various guild channels and messily discussed by many members first before it reached the Ten Guild Alliance’s figure heads.

Everyone was clear on who the target for this hunt was, so 27149’s appearance created much hubbub.

Those men who had personally participated in the guild war back then clearly remembered that 27149 had been instrumental in the Past Deeds’ demise. He was the hero that had ended Silver Moon, Vast Lushness, and company’s tyrannical reign in Yueye City, so none of them could fathom why 27149 had a change of heart and was now standing on the enemy’s side after just a month.

As the head honcho of the Ten Guild Alliance, Dusky Cloud did not have to participate in the hunt for the targets himself. However, he started paying attention to this matter once he learned that 27149 was intervening. With the Ten Guild Alliance's strength, there was essentially no need for it to provide preferential treatment to any player, but 27149 was the only exception. Even the game officials had delegated him as their unofficial spokesperson with that promotional video, which had created quite the buzz in and out of Parallel World, even making people wonder if such an indomitable existence was the result of an unspoken nepotism.

The lack of instructions from the upper echelons of the Ten Guild Alliance somewhat showed their indecision on how to proceed with the matter. As for the players who were currently in direct confrontation with 27149, they all stared open-mouthed at Gu Fei who was sprinting toward them while brandishing his sword.

This player right here was a legend! Even the banana peel he had just discarded seemed to be executed rather nobly. Those blocking the streets involuntarily took a step backward, as the player in charge of them hurriedly asked on the guild channel: "Guild leader, what do we do now?!"

After a brief emergency discussion between the ten guild leaders, this instruction was finally passed down: "Confirm the person's identity!"

"How do we do that?" the player asked.

"Ask him," was the reply that the player received.

The leader of the hunting team quickly acted accordingly, "Are you 27149? Thousand Miles Drunk?"

This name was probably listed in some unknown corner of the leaderboard, yet it was a name that was often mentioned by the entire player base.

Gu Fei had no reason to deny his identity, so he simply nodded his head in response.

Gu Fei's reply was swiftly reported to the top brasses, yet his sword was mere inches away from the team leader's throat by the time the discussion of the superiors was completed and an instruction was issued accordingly: "Retreat."

These men's rich experience PvPing under the Ten Guild Alliance's flag resulted into them developing a compliant personality to the upper echelons' will. As such, everyone turned to leave with just that one command from the top brasses.

"Hey! Why are you guys leaving?!" Gu Fei got flustered.

"Our bosses' order." The team leader looked directly at Gu Fei while saying this. "They said we need to give face to Thousand Miles Drunk, so we'll let this matter go this time around!"

Gu Fei sighed regretfully. He had never expected such a development. Gu Fei was unsure if he still had time to retract his earlier affirmation, but he had nothing to lose trying, "Actually, I'm not him."

The man halted his steps in shock and was very confused by the Mage's vacillation. Obviously, they would continue their hunt if Gu Fei was not 27149. It was clear that they had given him plenty of face by not doubting his claim, which allowed him to take advantage of the situation, so it absolutely made no sense for him to correct himself now.

There was no lack of PvP maniacs in MMOs, but few were as passionate about fighting as Gu Fei.

Gu Fei wanted to engage these players in PvP, while Fireball and the rest were hoping to escape with their shirts intact. Everyone sighed in relief when they heard that the enemies had decided to give Gu Fei face for this matter, but who would have guessed that Gu Fei would actually be so meddlesome? Seeing the enemies'

hesitation, Fireball hurriedly jumped in front of Gu Fei and said, “Drunk bro, stop joking around like this. Anyone here can tell you’re 27149 upon witnessing your fighting prowess. Besides you, is there any other Mage out there that can display such exquisite swordsmanship in a black, mage robe, and that sharp longswo—”

“Scram!” Gu Fei could not take his level of flattering.

The enemy team leader smiled ever so slightly at this. Indeed, Gu Fei matched the rumored 27149 to a tee. He looked the part, acted the part, and was OP enough. Even casting doubt on his identity and asking further questions were unnecessary. Who knew why he suddenly changed his mind about admitting to his identity? No matter how bold the Ten Guild Alliance’s members were, they still had a little selfishness in them. Grinding was not easy, so no one was willing to lose a level unnecessarily, and they knew better than to clash with a formidable foe like Gu Fei. Even if they had to fight him, it would still be better to not take the lead in this. With such a selfish thought in mind, this team leader merely led the men away with a wave of his arm. The enemy players blocking the other entryway seemed to have received a similar command from their superiors as they also departed accordingly.

Gu Fei disappointedly placed his sword back inside his dimensional pocket soundlessly.

Sakurazaka Moony and his gang were dumbfounded. Gu Fei was apparently not only an expert skirt-chaser, he was also in possession of godly gaming skill to the point where people would gladly give him face once his name was mentioned. These were people that had relentlessly pursued them for a full day and night as well....

In their eyes, Gu Fei’s awesomeness seemed to just grow more and more....

Gu Fei helplessly shrugged his shoulders as he turned to look at them, “Looks like everything fine now.”

“We should still be careful. Who knows if they have an ambush waiting for us outside this alley or even by the log-off points,” Sakurazaka Moony cautioned.

“They won’t,” Vast Lushness refuted this, saying, “Although they are not exactly good guys, they are at least men of their words. Since they already said that they won’t pursue this matter, then they really would uphold their word on account of Gu Fei today.”

“Mhm-mhm!” Gu Fei merely hummed in agreement. Sword Demon and War Without Wounds, who were better acquainted with Dusky Cloud and his men, considered them to be upright and hot-blooded. As for Gu Fei... When he had first come into contact with Dusky Cloud, the latter had actually been attempting to lure him into an ambush. Man! A person’s character is just way too complex.

Sakurazaka Moony and company finally felt reassured when they heard this. Having run all over Yueye City for an entire day and night, they barely had any energy left to even talk with one another, yet Sakurazaka Moony had just to ask Vast Lushness the question that had been plaguing his mind, “Just what sort of hatred do those guys have with you to actually go to such extent?!”

Mobilizing hundreds of players to relentlessly hunt them down... this vendetta seemed to run deeper than Marianas Trench.

Vast Lushness simply replied, “It’s nothing much. Just like today, I have been hunted down by them before.”

“Oh... Did you belong to that what’s-it-called guild in Yueye City, too?” Sakurazaka Moony asked. The large-scale guild war that had happened in Yueye City was still the most intense dispute in the history of Parallel World even now. It was rather famous, but because Sakurazaka Moony and his lot were not locals of Yueye City, they knew little about that event.

“Past Deeds?” Vast Lushness wryly smiled. Although she was still looking at Sakurazaka Moony, her eyes seemed to glaze over ever

so slightly, “All went their separate ways when tragedy struck!”

“What?” While Sakurazaka Moony was confused by her answer, Gu Fei thoroughly got what she meant. He even figured out why Vast Lushness had been smiling sincerely throughout this whole ordeal.

It was camaraderie!

Sakurazaka Moony, Fireball... This bunch of reprehensible gamers was not hot-blooded or vehemently arrogant about facing death. They had simply worked hard together to deal with the sudden hunt that they had found themselves in – just like how they would diligently do their best to woo a beautiful lady that they met on the street. Be it getting hunted by others or wooing beautiful women... They thought of everything as nothing more than slapstick entertainment that spiced up their lives.

They were comrades – a bunch of comrades playing this game in search of pleasure and fun.

Chapter 289 - Sombre Drinking

It was just as Vast Lushness had said; Dusky Cloud and his lot were indeed men of their words. Gu Fei and company walked down the streets under the watchful gazes of Yueye City's players, yet no one gave them a hard time.

Some players even looked familiar, as if they were among those who had closely pursued Sakurazaka Moony and his lot just moments ago, now walking no more than five meters apart from one another. Sakurazaka Moony was still on guard against these men, yet those players instead began chatting with them casually. "Are you guys logging off? Let's go together!" someone even warmly invited.

"M*th*r*f*ck*rs. What a bunch of d*ckw*ds." Sakurazaka Moony and his gang did not know whether to cry or laugh at this absurd situation. They were totally drained from running all day and night, and those people pursuing them all this while were naturally not in a better shape. The Ten Guild Alliance might have been able to swap the players out easily, given how many members it had, yet some of the faces Sakurazaka Moony was currently seeing belonged to those men that had tenaciously been on their tail from start to finish.

Sakurazaka Moony's team lost twenty members as a result of this, but the losses of the Ten Guild Alliance far surpassed that number. Most of them were killed off by Sakurazaka Moony and company's occasional volley of arrows when they got ensnared by the traps.

"Let's log off and rest up, then." Sakurazaka Moony and the gang made a beeline for the spawn point.

"What about tonight's mission?" Gu Fei asked, perplexed. All the mercenary groups were supposed to rendezvous with Traversing Four Seas in an hour to resume their journey toward the next in-

game city. Was Sakurazaka Moony giving up on this mission just for his mercenary group to be able to rest up and sleep in reality?

“Drunk bro, didn’t you hear from your mercenary group leader? We are temporarily staying over in Yueye City tonight. Seems like they have an important matter to attend to over here before we can continue the expedition.”

“Is that so? What business is that?” Gu Fei asked.

“I don’t know about that. I’ve been on the run all this while; where would I find the time to meet with them?!” Sakurazaka Moony answered.

“Oh. I’ll see you guys later, then!” Gu Fei bid them goodbye with a wave of his hand. Why would he log off now when he just got online a while ago?

With that, this bunch of people continued to head toward the nearest spawn point. Gu Fei had seen plenty of players showing dissatisfied looks after getting PKed, yet these reprehensible men were unexpectedly very open-minded about such matters. A person’s character is just too complex! Gu Fei sighed to himself.

With this matter resolved, Gu Fei was just about to acquire himself a ‘Bounty Mission’ from the Bounty Assignment Hall when he was alerted by the system of a new message. It was from Sword Demon: “Dusky Cloud is treating us to a round of drinks and is specifically mentioning you. Mind coming over for a bit?”

That was quick! Gu Fei thought to himself. He reckoned Dusky Cloud would promptly contact Sword Demon to find out what was going on the moment he caught wind of Thousand Miles Drunk extricating Sakurazaka Moony and company from their predicament. After fighting side by side in that previous guild war in Yueye City, Dusky Cloud and Sword Demon had added each other as friends. Hearing that Sword Demon and his fellow mercenaries were in Yueye City once more, Dusky Cloud saw it fit to receive them properly as the de facto overlord of the city.

Sword Demon and War Without Wounds had a good impression of Dusky Cloud, so it was unlikely for them to reject his offer. Royal God Call and Brother Assist did not have a particular opinion about him, but since this was a treat, they had no reason to miss it. As for Young Master Han, the fact that he did not see eye to eye with Dusky Cloud only gave him more incentive to take up his offer. Gu Fei reckoned Young Master Han would make it a point to drink more than his fill just to hurt Dusky Cloud through his pockets.

Gu Fei originally did not wish to join in on the fun, but thinking that Dusky Cloud and his gang had only let off Vast Lushness, Sakurazaka Moony, and company on his account today, he could not tell for sure what tomorrow would bring. While half of The Great Hunting's members managed to survive today, the Ten Guild Alliance might just hunt them down with greater ferocity than their hunt for the Past Deeds' members if he did not respond to Dusky Cloud's offer appropriately.

I better head over there and find out Dusky Cloud and the rest's plan of action! Gu Fei told himself. Getting the location from Sword Demon, he made his way over to the tavern.

Yueye City did not have any player-operated tavern like Ray's Bar in Yunduan City, so Dusky Cloud just chose the largest establishment in the heart of the city to hold the welcome party. Being the overlord that he was, all the tavern patrons vacated the premise once he entered the tavern. The system-designated tavern owner continued to conduct business as usual and attended to the remaining players, obviously not bothered by the sudden departure of a large bulk of customers.

When Gu Fei reached the tavern, the place was already jam-packed with people from the Ten Guild Alliance. He even saw the team leader that he had exchanged words with earlier occupying a table, along with a few others that had died by his sword moments ago. Every member of Young Master's Elite was indeed present,

sitting around a few small tables that were dragged together to form a large one. Dusky Cloud and a few others, whom Gu Fei could currently not recall the names of but reckoned were also leaders of the Ten Guild Alliance, were sitting with Young Master's Elite. The Ten Guild Alliance should at least have ten guild leaders as well, right?

The whole tavern grew quiet with Gu Fei's arrival. Sword Demon and the rest raised their hands to greet him; Dusky Cloud demonstrated the nimbleness that a Thief possessed by reaching Gu Fei in a few quick steps. With a handshake and a pat on the back, Dusky Cloud showed his pleasure to Gu Fei's presence, "You're finally here, bro. Come; let's take a seat."

Gu Fei followed him to the table everyone was occupying, took off the piece of cloth covering his face, and sat on a seat. Dusky Cloud offered a glass of liquor to Gu Fei, who received it with a word of thanks.

The liquor he had received was the very best, noting that the others were also enjoying the same sort of liquor; their table was not treated any differently from the rest alcohol-wise. Young Master Han took this opportunity to drink as much as he could; Dusky Cloud did not seem to mind his behavior in the least, merely ordering a few more bottles for the table when he discovered how much the man was enjoying himself.

Gu Fei even saw Brother Assist lift his fingers while watching Young Master Han drink. He chuckled to himself as he realized that Brother Assist must have nothing better to do than to calculate how much money Young Master Han had drunk away in this sitting.

Honestly speaking, besides fighting a guild war together in Parallel World's open beta days, not everyone on this table was familiar with Young Master's Elite. Once Gu Fei sat down, Dusky Cloud and his brothers immediately expressed their admiration for Gu Fei's fighting prowess and such.

Gu Fei felt obligated to humbly thank them for their kind words.

Dusky Cloud and his men might be uninhibitedly heroic when it came to PvPing, but speaking to strangers was evidently not their strong suit. They usually spoke bluntly with one another and their words were peppered with expletives every few sentences. They quickly hit it off among themselves upon realizing that they shared this common quirk.

Although some of these individuals held high positions, their way of speaking was all the same, so it was practically impossible to differentiate one man from another if anyone shut his or her eyes.

These leaders' casual uncouthness was highly incompatible when they were meeting people for the first time. However, removing the expletives in their speech would just cause these men to be at a loss for words. When the formal introductions ended, not one person around the table spoke, creating a very awkward atmosphere.

This situation persisted for several minutes. Eventually, Dusky Cloud lifted his glass and stood up. "That's Old Cloud for ya!" The other nine leaders were very excited, gazing at him rather expectantly.

"Ha! Cheers, everyone!" Dusky Cloud announced.

"F*ck*ng m*th*rf*ck*r, you're so useless Old Cloud!" They did not expect for Dusky Cloud to stand up and spout such inconsequential nonsense, so they eyed him contemptuously.

Dusky Cloud was obviously feeling awkward himself. He did not know what else to say after downing the entire content of a whole glass. He had easily found a topic to discuss with Sword Demon thanks to the latter being an avid gamer like himself and sharing the same job class. Right now, Dusky Cloud could not find any possible topic to discuss with Gu Fei, and the only question he could come up with after thinking for a while was: "Miles bro, what type of games did you play before Parallel World?"

“I hardly played any games before,” Gu Fei admitted. If Silver Moon were in Dusky Cloud’s position right now, he would surely follow up that question with: “So you’re practically a newbie when it comes to playing MMO yet you’re already this good? What a genius!” He would then keep the conversation going by supplementing it with a whole batch of flattering words. As for this bunch of men, Gu Fei’s lack of any gaming history to speak of only served to widen the language barrier between them.

All drank their liquor by themselves as a result, while the host Dusky Cloud felt extremely embarrassed at how things had turned out. He regretted calling this bunch of useless idiots along for this; he should have brought those players that were great at livening up the atmosphere, instead! Dusky Cloud got pissed when he thought of this. Slapping the table, he said, “M*th*rf*ck*ng Celestial Pig, don’t you usually have a lot to say?! Why are you so quiet today?!”

Celestial Pig scratched his head for a bit. Looking at Gu Fei, he finally blurted out, “Didn’t you slay me before?!”

Dusky Cloud almost keeled over and fainted. I asked you to say something, yet you actually said something so acrimonious! Every inch of him really wished to drag the idiot out to the back and shoot him in the back of his head.

Unexpectedly, Gu Fei nodded his head in agreement. “I think I did. Were you together with No Smile at the time? Speaking of which, it’s been a long time since I last saw that guy.” He glanced at the men around him as he said this, but these men ‘coincidentally’ brought their glass to their mouths. They looked as if they were contented with just watching the show unfold.

“Oh, he isn’t around...” Dusky Cloud said, slightly embarrassed. No Smile was online, but Dusky Cloud did not call him over. Anyway, he was certain that No Smile would not willingly turn up even if he requested for the latter to be present.

No Smile had lost a total of ten levels when Gu Fei had hunted him down in the past. However, the number of experience points he had lost for those ten levels was equivalent to dropping from level 40 to level 39; it really was not much.

Despite this, the impact of Gu Fei's action on No Smile had been huge. No Smile was still reluctant to offer his name when someone asked for it even to this day, just like how Fireball was. To those players who were aware of that past incident, No Smile's name was synonymous with 'loser'. No matter how formidable he became in the future, he would forever be that loser Thousand Miles Drunk had once dropped by ten levels.

No Smile's hatred for Gu Fei was something that could not easily be reconciled. Even recalling the psychological damage Gu Fei had inflicted on him was painful for No Smile. This was precisely why Dusky Cloud felt awkward; being a good friend of No Smile's, not only did he fail to avenge his humiliation, he was even currently sharing the same table and drinks with Gu Fei.

There was nothing he could do about this, though. While Dusky Cloud wanted to help No Smile slay Gu Fei, No Smile was not exactly well regarded by his friends. Out of the other nine guild leaders present, eight essentially did not care for his existence, while the moron Celestial Pig had no opinion of him either way. Just his previous question to Gu Fei moments ago showed his lack of tact.

Even Dusky Cloud himself could not understand how he had become such good friends with No Smile. Evidently, the impression these two players had of each other in the other MMOs they had played together in the past was entirely supplemented by their wishful thinking of each other. It was not so easy to hide the players' real personality in this fully immersive environment, since Parallel World was a VRMMO that allowed them to come face to face with one another.

Now that Dusky Cloud had personally met No Smile in Yueye

City, the thought of helping the latter constantly wavered.

Chapter 290 - Vicious Words from Young Master Han

While Dusky Cloud was recalling the past he had shared with No Smile, Celestial Pig actually latched on to the topic of being killed by Gu Fei and ran with it. Gu Fei had slain him outside Yunduan City to save Vast Lushness back then. Because of what Celestial Pig and his men were doing to Vast Lushness, he did not have a particularly good impression of him. However, Celestial Pig's act of raising this issue naturally led to a topic about Vast Lushness, which was exactly perfect for Gu Fei.

At that time, Celestial Pig and his men did not know that Gu Fei was Fugitive 27149. Now that they were aware of this, Dusky Cloud could more or less deduce why Gu Fei had saved Vast Lushness today.

Vast Lushness had really been reduced into a terrible state by their relentless hunt for her. That woman was inherently stubborn, though. Despite being reduced into a terrible state, she still maintained her arrogance in the face of so many men, which only made it difficult for them to hold back and treat Vast Lushness in a way that was befitting her gender. In actuality, the reason why their hatred for Vast Lushness had lasted until now was that she had an attitude that seemed to be begging for trouble. Vast Lushness's foolhardy spirit despite her losses had completely awakened their desire to destroy her. Hunting her down for almost a whole month... Their patience to exact their vengeance even after such a long time was pretty much forged as a result of her actions.

In contrast, those who were not in the know could easily sympathize with Vast Lushness's plight. However, Dusky Cloud felt that Gu Fei should have been on their side; after all, he had been forced to hide inside a high-level grinding map back then as a

result of unintentionally offending her. Hence, he could not fathom how Vast Lushness's stubborn personality had managed to garner sympathy from Gu Fei when it had not affected him at all. As Dusky Cloud was wondering about this, Celestial Pig once more unintentionally helped him get the answer, "Miles bro, when did you become good friends with Vast Lushness?"

"He he. Just leave her some leeway. Is there really a need for you guys to be so thorough in tormenting her?" Instead of answering Celestial Pig's question, Gu Fei directly pleaded for her case. Sword Demon and the others exchanged furtive looks when they heard him. The Gu Fei that they knew was a merciless killer, yet here he was, asking others to stay their hands. It was pretty hilarious.

"Miles bro, as a good friend of ours, we are really hoping that you won't interfere in this matter," Dusky Cloud requested. He had invited Young Master's Elite over for drinks mainly because he wanted to thank them for their assistance in the guild war back then and partly because he wanted to ask Gu Fei why he was lending Vast Lushness a hand.

"Unfortunately, I have already interfered," Gu Fei sighed, glancing over to a certain table, "I might have slain a few friends over there earlier."

Dusky Cloud was naturally aware of this, and he too swept his gaze over to that particular table. "We'll let it go. I believe my men won't mind, either. As for Vast Lushness—"

"We'll put it behind us, as well! After being chased for a whole day and night, I'm sure those guys won't mind this resolution, either," Gu Fei quipped, adding on to Dusky Cloud's words.

Dusky Cloud was stunned for a good while. He had never expected for a handful of players to actually object over the Ten Guild Alliance's hunt for Vast Lushness. In Yueye City, those who found themselves being targeted by the Ten Guild Alliance could only blame their luck. These people might object to it in their

minds, but they could never use it as a bargaining chip in the negotiating table. The difference in strength of the clashing parties was essentially day and night!

“What does Boss Cloud think of it?” Seeing that Dusky Cloud was in a daze, he quickly inquired after it.

“This...” Dusky Cloud could currently not come up with an answer. He had no wish to give up their hunt for Vast Lushness at all, and he invited Gu Fei over in hopes of stopping him from interfering. He felt that they had already given him plenty of face by backing off earlier today, yet who would have thought that Gu Fei would be so obtuse, using those few players’ objection to the circumstance as a bargaining chip! While the Ten Guild Alliance’s objection held a lot of weight with their strength, Gu Fei and those handful of men’s objection was almost nothing in comparison.

“Speaking of which, we are only here temporarily, and we will be leaving Yueye City tomorrow,” Gu Fei informed.

“Ah, yes. I’ve heard about that,” Dusky Cloud answered. As the pseudo-overlord of Yueye City, the appearance of a large number of players was something he had long been informed about. Sending men to inquire about their presence, he learned that this was an escort mission involving the number one guild and top mercenary groups in Yunduan City.

“Regarding Vast Lushness, what will Miles bro do if we don’t let her of?” Dusky Cloud asked instead. He had no intention of backing down from this. Although Gu Fei was a fearsome opponent, he was just one man. There were two level 5, four level 4, three level 3, and one level 2 guilds – for a total of four thousand five hundred fifty members – within the Ten Guild Alliance, after all. He had only asked his men to stop today’s chase due to Gu Fei’s connection with them. His men happened to not have the word ‘fear’ in their vocabulary – something that they had in common with Vast Lushness. It was such a pity that these two headstrong parties were poised against each other... Obviously, neither party

was willing to back down now that it had escalated to this point.

“It can’t be helped, then” Gu Fei sighed, saying, “Guess I’ll just continue giving them a hand and slay a few more of your comrades.”

“Miles bro, you’re so straightforward! I deeply admire such a trait in a man. Then, let’s not go easy on one another when we meet on the fighting field, but let’s remain friends outside of that,” Dusky Cloud declared.

“That would be for the best.” Gu Fei was extremely gratified. Being able to slay people and not affect their relationship... This was possibly the most ideal resolution to PK maniacs like him.

“Cheers to that!” Dusky Cloud raised his glass.

“Cheers!” Gu Fei lifted his glass and clanked it against Dusky Cloud’s, finishing its content in one gulp.

“Awesome!” Dusky Cloud shouted heartily. His fellow brothers also commended his resolution of the matter.

It seemed that only Sword Demon and the others of Young Master’s Elite felt discomfited about this. Just what sort of negotiation was this? The two parties did not achieve their goal, yet they instead reached an agreement where both sides could kill one another without repercussions.

“I say, Boss Cloud... Why are you guys so focused on bullying a woman while Silver Moon can strut around freely?” A cold voice suddenly pierced through the room’s din, which belonged to none other than Young Master Han. He could no longer stand the silly negotiation Gu Fei and Dusky Cloud had come to an accord and finally said his piece.

Dusky Cloud showed great forbearance at this. Among the six-man mercenary group, he despised Young Master Han the most. Were it not for Young Master Han being friends with Sword Demon and the others, Dusky Cloud would willingly slay him a

hundred times.

Dusky Cloud was not two-faced, after all. His feelings got the better of him and he openly expressed his disdain for Young Master Han without mirth, “What do you mean by that, bro?”

Young Master Han swirled his glass leisurely, yet his eyes remained focused, not bothering to look at Dusky Cloud, “Silver Moon is currently in Yueye City; does Boss Cloud not know about this?”

“Silver Moon is here as well? Are you serious?” Dusky Cloud truly had no clue about this.

“He he... Do you guys have selective blindness?” Young Master Han’s mouth curled icily, holding nothing back to disparage these men with every inflection of his words. Quite a few men even jumped up and slammed their fists on the table, “D*mn you! What are you insinuating?!”

“Nothing. I’ve drunk too much. Guess I’ll take my leave first,” Young Master Han stood up and waved at the tavern owner, “Boss, bill please.”

“No need; it’s my treat,” Dusky Cloud said. Although he did not like Young Master Han at all, he had no desire to be labeled as an improper host over this bit of money.

“No need; just allow me to be included in your selective blindness as well!” Young Master Han said mockingly as he took out his coin purse.

“F*CK!” Another guild leader could no longer stand Young Master Han’s taunts. He got up to attack him, but the table somewhat hindered him from using a skill, so he opted to just grab a bottle off the table and tossed it over. Gu Fei was just about to lend a hand, but Sword Demon, who was currently beside Young Master Han, was much faster. Lifting his hand to bat the bottle away, he simply said, “Forget it!”

“Yeah!” Gu Fei agreed, “He’s like this; it’s really annoying.”

“That’s right. He’s not skilled when it comes to combat, so he can only focus his effort on his mouth!” Royal God Call used this chance to take a few shots at Young Master Han.

“Oh, yeah; he’s super arrogant!” War Without Wounds was probably still sulking over being assigned as a bodyguard for Young Master Han and Brother Assist during the mercenary PvP tournament.

Only Brother Assist was considerate enough to not say anything negative about him.

Dusky Cloud also stood up. Restraining the guild leader that had acted moments ago, he lightly said, “So be it. I won’t see you out.”

Young Master Han raised an eyebrow before saying, “No need to see me out. I suggest you spend that time looking for Silver Moon, instead; it’ll at least be more productive than chasing after a girl.”

“Arghhh! Can’t you just keep quiet?!” Young Master’s Elite’s mercenary channel burst into activity.

“Just one last thing...” Young Master Han typed this on the mercenary channel. He was almost out of the establishment, with his hand pushing the door halfway open, when he glanced at the bunch of men eyeing him with fury and said, “That woman is just a Priest, too.”

“F*CK!” Even more men jumped to their feet, yet Dusky Cloud stopped them from acting with his eyes.

“We won’t mind if you organize a hunting party for him,” War Without Wounds sincerely said.

Dusky Cloud laughed bitterly before gazing up the ceiling, “He’s not wrong, you know? Vast Lushness is indeed just a female Priest. It’s really meaningless to kill her.”

With that, he addressed the remaining five men, “Is Silver Moon

really in Yueye City?”

The five of them nodded their heads with Gu Fei saying, “I can lend you guys a hand if you decide to hunt for Silver Moon.”

“What?” Dusky Cloud was surprised to see his different attitude. Naturally, the rumors about Silver Moon shirking responsibility had not reached Yueye City yet. Everyone here knew the pair’s story inside and out, so they did not feel the need to learn more about the two’s ‘epilogue’. Dusky Cloud and his men continued to lump Silver Moon and Vast Lushness together since they did not know of the ensuing fallout after the Past Deeds’ collapse.

After Gu Fei gave them a brief rundown of Silver Moon’s actions, the entire tavern bubbled into fervor, “F*ck me! Silver Moon is such a b*st*rd – a f*ck*ng coward to the very end!”

“That shameless person... To think I once considered him as a man’s man like us!”

“Shameless! Nothing more needs to be said about this. Let’s just slay him!”

“SLAY HIM!” Dusky Cloud slapped the table decisively, “Call all our brothers online to search the entire city for Silver Moon. Anyone who provides any leads about this will be properly rewarded!”

Chapter 291 - The Prison Entrance

It was currently the peak period for the game, so over four thousand members of the Ten Guild Alliance were online. At Dusky Cloud's command, all these ten guilds were stirred into a frenzy as they began searching for Silver Moon's hiding place.

Locate, hunt, and kill the target... The Ten Guild Alliance was skilled at doing this sort of activities. In fact, it was not even an issue for them that Yueye City's players were covering their faces. As the organization that reigned supreme in Yueye City, no player out there would refuse to remove the cloth covering his or her face upon The Ten Guild Alliance's request.

However, these four thousand players' hot-blooded search simmered down when they realized that Silver Moon was not even online.

Given how shrewd Silver Moon was, he knew that the best course of action for him was to not reveal himself in Yueye City; he had already decided to remain offline while the expedition was staying in the city. He did not even set his character to respawn in Yueye City upon death. It was better to err on the side of caution, after all. Silver Moon knew that being spawn camped was the only fate awaiting him if his enemies caught sight of him, so he would rather return to Yunduan City upon his death than to fall into the vicious cycle of dying and respawning. His in-game life would be as good as over if that really happened.

Those that were inside the tavern came to this disappointing realization as they were about to move out following Dusky Cloud's command.

"M*th*rf*ck*r! That b*st*rd is still as cunning as ever!" Those who had clashed with him before were loudly cursing Silver Moon; they even went as far as to bring up his past wretched actions, leaving Gu Fei, Brother Assist, War Without Wounds, and Royal

God Call horrified.

“Seems like Silver Moon has led quite the legendary life,” Brother Assist sighed.

“Yeah. Still, his legend looks to be about to come to an end,” Royal God Call remarked.

Dusky Cloud continued relaying instructions from the tavern, assigning the Ten Guild Alliance’s members to stake out the seven job classes’ safe zones for any Knight that was coming online. He especially emphasized on the need for all those Knights to remove the pieces of cloth covering their faces. At the sight of the Ten Guild Alliance’s emblem, the players of Yueye City could only swallow their dissent and cooperate with these men. Anyone who chose to resist—honestly, anyone who resisted would be killed off, whether that person was Silver Moon or just a regular civilian. There was just no way for Silver Moon to escape now.

“Hmph. At most, you’ll be able to kill him once,” Young Master Han interjected when he saw Gu Fei and the rest’s discussion about it on the mercenary channel.

“Why do you say that?” Royal God Call asked.

“Just the fact that Silver Moon isn’t online at this peak hour clearly shows his intention to stay hidden. Since he knows the danger waiting for him, he will certainly not set his character to respawn in Yueye City, so if he gets killed this time, his character will probably be sent back to Yunduan City; get it?” Young Master Han explained.

“That makes sense!” They agreed to this reasoning and quickly passed it over to Dusky Cloud. Dusky Cloud also thought that it was logical; killing Silver Moon just once was simply not enough to satisfy his appetite for revenge, especially after he had mobilized his force in such a grand scale.

“Old Cloud, why don’t we assign a few brothers to block the

Knights' Barracks in Yunduan City as well?" someone suggested.

"This..." Dusky Cloud was rather hesitant to do that. This was because Yunduan City was not their home ground. Moreover, he did know how Silver Moon had progressed or how many friends he had acquired in that city. Gu Fei and company were unable to provide him much information either, since all they knew was that Silver Moon had a forty-man mercenary group. Besides, it would be foolish to underestimate Silver Moon's capability, given his shrewdness and diplomatic skills.

Gu Fei had come to know of Silver Moon's excellent social skills after spending a few hours squatting in prison with him. What separated Silver Moon from Dusky Cloud was how the latter only befriended players whom he acknowledged or had a similar temperament. Dusky Cloud would never befriend someone like Young Master Han. As for Silver Moon, he was hypocritical enough to do just that. Spreading his net wide, he could easily call anyone a comrade. Even if he was tricking someone, he could easily put on a happy countenance and not reveal his hand until the last moment, making him more difficult to deal with than Dusky Cloud. The positions these two had once held in Yueye City before were proof enough of this; were it not for Young Master's Elite's help, Dusky Cloud and his comrades would likely still be under Silver Moon's foot right now!

Dusky Cloud had even fallen into Silver Moon's trap in Yunduan City before. Thinking about it now, Dusky Cloud felt unsure that he would be able to kill the man even if he sent all four thousand members of the alliance over.

After much pondering, Dusky Cloud was struck with inspiration and he hurriedly asked Gu Fei and the others, "What exactly are you guys doing for your mission, anyway?"

"We're helping a guild escort something to its destination," Gu Fei replied.

“So you’ll head to other cities to carry out the mission?” Dusky Cloud’s eyes glinted as he asked this.

“Yeah... If I remember correctly, we will be passing through five in-game cities,” Brother Assist replied.

“You can’t possibly be thinking...” The five men trailed off, somewhat guessing Dusky Cloud’s intention.

“Since Silver Moon doesn’t dare set his character to revive here in Yueye City, he’ll definitely have to do so in the next city. We’ll attack and take him down there, instead. He may have many tricks up his sleeves, but he’ll be unable to do anything in a city he has never been to before!” Dusky Cloud declared.

“True!” All nodded their heads in agreement.

“Great! Select a few of our brothers. We’ll join Yunduan City’s expedition team on the road and give Silver Moon a run for his money once we reach the next city,” Dusky Cloud spiritedly ordered.

All those inside the tavern voiced their agreement and earnestly volunteered for this operation.

Dusky Cloud swept his gaze through the crowd, “Those brothers who came later shan’t compete for a spot in this operation. Let’s leave this chance to bully Silver Moon to those who have previously been bullied by him!”

“That’s right!” Celestial Pig was the first to stand up. Slapping the table heavily, he resolutely said, “I’ll bully him to death!”

The entire tavern burst into laughter. Celestial Pig’s strong response to this suggestion revealed the fact that he had been bullied terribly by Silver Moon in the past. Celestial Pig felt embarrassed at his faux-pas and awkwardly returned to his seat.

Gu Fei and the rest did not know how Dusky Cloud would choose his men, but they did watch the people before them plot and arrange their revenge against Silver Moon.

“Isn’t this a little cruel?” War Without Wounds asked Sword Demon.

“What do you think?” Sword Demon asked Royal God Call.

“I’m looking forward to it,” Royal God Call was looking at Gu Fei when he said this.

“With so many men on their side, I don’t think they’ll need my help,” Gu Fei expressed his dejection.

Brother Assist consolingly patted Gu Fei on his back, “There are other more meaningful things for you to do.”

“Like what?” Gu Fei asked.

“It’s almost 7 P.M. We’ve got a mission to do!” Brother Assist replied.

“Aren’t we staying here in Yueye City today?” Gu Fei asked, nonplussed.

“While we won’t be resuming our journey today, the mission still has to go on. Have you forgotten? We still haven’t seen what item Traversing Four Seas has to escort! It’s because today is the day when we’ll retrieve this item in Yueye City,” Brother Assist supplied.

“Why don’t I know anything about this?” Gu Fei was very confused.

Royal God Call patted Gu Fei on his back as well. “If you’re online more often, you’d know of this as well.”

Apparently, while 7 P.M. was the official time for all the players involved to gather and perform the guild quest’s main mission, any information, planning, and such stuff were relayed and discussed as early as the morning. Gu Fei was never online that early in the day, so it was not surprising for him to be in the dark about all this.

The five men of Young Master’s Elite got up and bid Dusky Cloud

farewell. The man made an effort to send them out the door, requesting, “Don’t forget to tell your bros if you see Silver Moon around!” After making the arrangements for the plan, Dusky Cloud dispersed his men stationed at the various spawn points to prevent Silver Moon from suspecting that anything was afoot.

“Sure thing!” the five men replied.

“Oh, yeah. What’s the next city you guys are heading to? I’ll see if I can make prior preparations for it,” Dusky Cloud said.

“I think it’s Baishi City,” Brother Assist replied, adding, “But we’re not sure how we will get there.”

“Okay. Thanks a lot!” Dusky Cloud said.

“Oh, that’s right, Old Cloud!” Royal God Call suddenly spoke up, “Do you guys happen to have any conflict with Drifting?”

“Drifting? The number one Mage? Well... We’ve never even met him before!” Dusky Cloud was quite puzzled by Royal God Call’s inquiry and he questioningly stared at him.

“Aww... That’s such a pity...” Royal God Call sighed regretfully.

“Oh?” Dusky Cloud somewhat figured what Royal God Call was getting at. “Bro, are you the one who has some issues with that twerp? Don’t worry; just say the word and I’ll make sure he won’t be leaving Yueye City.”

“Now that’s what I’m talking about!” Royal God Call was elated. “Just get him—”

Before he could finish his words, Gu Fei extended an arm and squeezed Royal God Call’s neck under his armpits, gagging the latter. He then smiled at Dusky Cloud, “This kid here is spouting nonsense; ignore him.”

“That right. This guy enjoys playing pranks a little too much, so don’t take him seriously,” War Without Wounds added. It was easy for Royal God Call to extricate himself from Gu Fei’s sleeper hold,

but War Without Wounds came to take over that hold with his arm.

“Bye! We’re leaving!” Brother Assist abruptly said their goodbyes to those in the tavern and the four men dragged Royal God Call along. “War Without Wounds! LET ME GO, YOU B*ST*RD!” Royal God Call struggled with his all, slowly disappearing from Dusky Cloud’s line of sight.

“Uhm... Take care...” Dusky Cloud returned to his senses and stiffly waved his hand, wiping the sweat off his forehead after.

At that moment, most of the players from Yunduan City were gathered outside Yueye City’s prison entrance. Oathless Sword was standing at the entrance steps, dwarfing the players around him. His face had a solemn expression. He swept his gaze around, and when he judged that almost all of them were present, he began his speech, “Everyone, we originally thought that today’s job would be a piece of cake. But given how every step of the way since our departure from Yunduan City has been fraught with hidden danger, I’ve taken precaution by gathering all of you here. Please get ready to enter combat at any moment; I’m not ruling out such a possibility.”

When he finished speaking, Youthful Reflection immediately went up the steps and gestured about as if he were an orchestra conductor. He was probably relaying instructions through the guild channel and the party channel that he shared with all the mercenary leaders. Shortly after this, the players separately began to take up positions and prepare to receive an attack from any direction.

Oathless Sword sternly surveyed everyone before pulling out two claymores and heading to the guards standing by the prison entrance. He assumed a battle-ready stance as he started speaking to the NPC.

“F*CK!” Oathless Sword cursed after speaking with the NPC. All

the players anxiously looked around them for any enemies.

“G*dd*mm*t!” Oathless Sword cursed again, his expression turning grim as he turned to inform all the players, “They want me to pay them money.”

“Screw you!” All the players raised their middle fingers at Oathless Sword.

“So is there a need for us to fight or not?” someone asked aloud.

“Just be on standby. Don’t leave just yet,” Oathless Sword replied.

The players stayed alert as they vigilantly observed their surroundings. Gu Fei and the rest of Young Master's Elite were also observing the vicinity in a similar fashion. Pedestrians would pass by them from time to time, each of them pausing and examining Gu Fei from head to toe. Looking around, these pedestrians would hesitate for quite some time before turning to leave.

“Just what’s going on here?” Gu Fei was perplexed. His sharp senses had obviously alerted him to the odd behavior every passerby had when they regarded him. Gu Fei currently did not have anything covering his face, nor was he holding a sword. His right hand was deep in his pocket, while his left hand was absentmindedly stroking his jaw. Besides his black, mage robe, he looked similar in every way to the players around him. Thus, he could not think of why he was attracting the attention of those passersby.

The experienced gamers Sword Demon and the rest were the ones who figured out the reason behind this, asking Gu Fei, “How many PK points do you have right now?”

“Eh? 14 PK points!” Gu Fei finally figured out what was going on. Slapping his thigh, he said, “See? That’s why I say Yueye City is a truly wonderful place!”

In the peaceful city of Yunduan, almost no one would bother

about doing ‘Bounty Mission’. Over in Yueye City where PvPing was the norm, players would prioritize clearing off their PK points as soon as they could, which in turn ensured that the Bounty Assignment Hall was often filled with bounty hunters. How great would it be if they could earn a few extra rewards while clearing off their PK value? As such, a target with high PK value like Gu Fei was essentially ripe for the picking for these bounty hunters.

A person who could earn so much PK value, based on the experience of these players from Yueye City, was usually the main damage dealer or the Mage of a party. In such a situation, the party members would either help their teammate clear off his or her PK value or carry on their grinding or PvPing... Despite all these, many players with a gambler’s mentality were unwilling to let go of such a fat lamb and obtained the ‘Bounty Mission’ just to see if there were any opportunities to exploit before acting.

When they arrived at the system-supplied coordinates, these bounty hunters disappointingly saw that there was no opportunity for them to exploit to harvest this particularly ripe fruit.

They had already considered the possibility of the Mage not being alone with such a high PK value, yet they had never expected him to have so many comrades. The entrance of the prison was crowded with players! With such a large bunch of players present, if not someone from the Ten Guild Alliance, who else would the target be?

All the bounty hunters came to this conclusion. Walking near their target and greedily eyeing him, these men still did not dare to eat such a tasty morsel before this thousand-man army.

“Say... I don’t think anything is gonna happen here, so I’ll go take a look elsewhere!” Gu Fei said.

The other five men of Young Master’s Elite exchanged furtive glances. How could they not tell what Gu Fei was thinking? Evidently, he had realized that those people were after his ‘Bounty

Mission' but did not dare to make a move on him once they saw the many players with him. Thus, Gu Fei was taking the initiative to provide these bounty hunters a chance to attack him by separating himself from the others.

Gu Fei was not about to discuss this matter with them and simply sprinted away from the location after informing them.

"Tsk!" The five men could only shake their heads.

"How depraved!" War Without Wounds sighed.

"He's a walking disaster," Royal God Call agreed.

"We should stick a sign on him, saying, 'DANGER! STAY AWAY!'" Brother Assist commented.

"I really pity those people who are just hoping to clear off their PK points."

"Won't they lose two levels if they've got PK points on them?"

"It's two levels only if their PK value is below 10 points."

"He's just too depraved..." These men were now praying for those players who were about to fall victim to Gu Fei's sword.

Gu Fei excitedly left his mercenary group, arriving at a place where no one would mistake him for someone who had backup and assumed his lackadaisical stance earlier.

Gu Fei could already feel someone standing behind him in less than a minute. He happily pulled out his sword and turned around, only to freeze on the spot, "Why is it you?!"

"I got bored, so I followed you when I saw you skulking away. Why are you posing like that in this secluded area, anyway?" The person who had followed Gu Fei was Svelte Dancer. This former PvP partner in the guild versus guild tournament was similar to Gu Fei in that she could also not sit still for long, especially when they had to listen to the rigorous battle plans being discussed.

Waiting by the prison entrance had already left Svelte Dancer

feeling impatient. She had been looking around in her boredom when she spotted Gu Fei dashing away. Svelte Dancer decided to follow him, yet she saw Gu Fei just foolishly standing there, causing her to feel disappointed.

“Me? I am—” Gu Fei’s answer was interrupted by an arrow flying toward him. When the Archer saw that his target was just a lone Mage, he strongly felt that he had lucked out and promptly fired off that one arrow toward Gu Fei.

Gu Fei dodged the arrow by turning his body to the side. He followed the arrow’s flight path back to its origin but saw that Svelte Dancer was already sprinting over in Fleetfoot mode.

“D*mn!” Gu Fei was aggrieved. Since the Archer was quite a distance away, there was no way Gu Fei could reach him before the speedster Svelte Dancer even if he used Blink. It seemed that this kill would be snatched by Svelte Dancer from him.

The Archer noticed that Gu Fei and the woman darting toward him were acquainted. While he was taken aback that a Thief was taking the initiative to attack him, he did not really care much for it at first; female players were usually rather limited skill-wise, after all. The Archer was about to begin kiting her when he realized that only a few meters of distance were separating them. “How can she be this fast?!” he exclaimed. With Svelte Dancer appearing right before him, the man turned around to flee. This move of his was a fatal mistake against a Thief, though, as he had basically presented his unprotected back to the Thief, allowing Svelte Dancer to unleash a skill without changing her position. Svelte Dancer executed Backstab in one swift motion, bringing silence back to the world.

“Hey, why did this guy want to—” Svelte Dancer turned to ask Gu Fei as to why an Archer was targeting him, but she instead saw Gu Fei engaging a Thief in combat.

Saying that the two were fighting was an exaggeration. By the

time Svelte Dancer fully turned around, the trailing flames from Gu Fei's sword had already burned the Thief to crisp.

“AH!” Svelte Dancer was just about to ask the question again when someone's voice came from down the street, “The target's over here! Quick!”

Four men now appeared from the end of this street corner and rushed straight toward Gu Fei once they caught sight of him. Someone among them shouted, “You should begin the fight!” This person was evidently the one who had picked up the ‘Bounty Mission’, and the others were just there to help their friend suppress the target.

Svelte Dancer was a step quicker than them, though. Rushing forward to block their advancement, her dagger plunged into the person who had just yelled. The man did not even manage to react before white light enveloped him, only realizing that the beautiful woman before him had stabbed him when he disappeared.

The other three men felt shocked. But with their friend's death, they no longer had a reason to do this ‘Bounty Mission’, so they attempted to flee, yet Svelte Dancer did not allow them to do so. Since the female Thief was boldly chasing after them, the three men gave up on fleeing and prepared themselves for a fight, instead.

Svelte Dancer took two steps backward and disappeared right before the men's eyes.

“It's Stealth! Watch out!” These experienced PvPers promptly faced their backs against one another, forming a triangle to prevent Svelte Dancer from using Backstab on them.

Unfortunately for them, that was not Svelte Dancer's fighting style. She was normally too lazy to use Stealth, but since she had recently acquired the Shadow Walk skill, she decided to test it out in this PvP setting.

No matter how experienced these players were at PvPing, none of them had encountered this skill before. Someone received a stab to his front, but when no one appeared with that strike, he became extremely baffled. Svelte Dancer's second stab finished off the man before he could even catch a glimpse of his assailant.

The other two men suffered a similar fate. Svelte Dancer executed Bludgeon to the left and Backstab to the right before revealing herself and ending their lives once and for all. The experiment was now complete and the results were in. She muttered to herself, "It's pretty OP, but it drains my mana quickly."

Shadow Walk consumed 7% of her total mana every second. This meant that she could only use the skill for a maximum of fourteen seconds. In that fourteen seconds, any additional skill she unleashed would further deplete her mana. Hence, while this skill could theoretically last for fourteen seconds, this fight had shown that it would be much less than that. Svelte Dancer had activated Fleetfoot prior to the fight, so her mana was already slightly diminished before she even performed that first Backstab. As such, that experiment of hers did not even last for ten seconds. Svelte Dancer's final Bludgeon and Backstab on the two enemies had caused her to use up all her mana.

She took out a piece of fruit to replenish her mana and casually glanced over to Gu Fei to ask her question from before. Instead....

"WHY ARE THERE STILL SOME MORE?!" Svelte Dancer exclaimed. Gu Fei was taking on a Warrior at the moment.

Over by the prison entrance, the finely attuned ears of the old and young degenerates, War Without Wounds and Royal God Call, pricked up, and the two exchanged glances, "Did you hear that?"

Brother Assist furrowed his brows, "I think I heard that, too."

"That's a woman's squeal."

“Yeah. And it’s in the direction Miles has run off to....”

“What is he doing there?”

War Without Wounds’ expression changed ever so slightly, “He is not so cruel as to strike a woman, right?”

All turned their gazes at him and answered in unison, “He is.”

“Let’s go take a look, then!” These men were actually pretty bored hanging around the prison entrance as well, so they quickly turned around to head over to Gu Fei’s location.

Chapter 292 - Run Gu Fei, Run

The members of Young Master's Elite ran toward the origin of the exclamation. When the Amethyst Rebirth ladies discovered that Svelte Dancer was missing, they rushed over as well upon recognizing her squeal.

These two groups rushed over from two different directions and ended up seeing a black figure and a red figure run past them.

There were too many people, far beyond the number Gu Fei had expected. Gu Fei felt that he might have made a huge mistake. The player count had increased tremendously ever since Parallel World's official release; plenty of players would surely have PK value on them considering the prevailing atmosphere in Yueye City, and each of them would be hoping to clear it fast, so it was a given that many of them would be gutsy enough to pick up Gu Fei's lucrative 'Bounty Mission' that was worth 14 PK points.

Svelte Dancer's killing-spree quickly accumulated her PK value, and she became the second most wanted fugitive in Yueye City following Gu Fei's, acquiring herself quite a lot of bounty hunters as well.

Given how their location was right next to Yueye City's prison, which was conveniently placed close to the Bounty Assignment Hall, plenty of bounty hunters happily rushed toward the two. Before long, Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer started experiencing immense pressure from the combined force of their bounty hunters.

Svelte Dancer's mana was thoroughly depleted by her test of the Shadow Walk skill, yet another assault was already upon her before she could finish replenishing it. Gu Fei had it much worse, as he did not even get the chance to munch on a piece of fruit after using up all his mana. In fact, Gu Fei's situation was more perilous as well. With his higher PK value than Svelte Dancer's, more

players were aiming for him. Svelte Dancer was decked out in top-grade equipment as well, so she was still considerably powerful despite her depleted mana. This was in stark contrast of Gu Fei. He was considered as a very peculiar Mage, yet the fact remained that he was still restrained by the limitations of being one. Without mana, the damage he could deal was insignificant.

Gu Fei could rely on his skill as a fighter and Svelte Dancer could rely on her superior equipment if there were only few enemies. However, Yueye City's Bounty Assignment Hall currently resembled a base that kept spitting out soldiers, with Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer acting like a rally point for players to gather. At a glance, these players seemed to be forming a line to take shots at the two. "Hey!" Even the unrestrained Svelte Dancer could not help but worry over their current situation and called Gu Fei's attention as they fought, "We can't continue like this; there are just too many of them!"

Gu Fei nodded his head gravely. Although he enjoyed fighting with many players, Gu Fei had no intention to die because of that pleasure. Combat was similar to a competitive sport, where its greatest charm lay in victory. Gu Fei might enjoy PvP, but he also needed the satisfaction brought by winning the fight. In fact, what he relished about fighting was the process of him steadily attaining victory. Was there even anyone out there who would enjoy fighting if he or she could not achieve victory?

Having determined that they did not stand a chance of becoming victorious in their situation, the two exchanged looks and fled in unison. Young Master's Elite and Amethyst Rebirth happened to reach their location at this time and saw this embarrassing scene of the two fleeing with Yueye City's dedicated PvPers hot on their heels.

Svelte Dancer's movement speed was astoundingly fast despite not activating Fleetfoot, so no one could catch up to her. As for Gu Fei, although he had an all-Agility build that was further improved

by the Agility granted by his Moonlit Nightfalls, Bandit Leader's Ring, and Eddie's Emblem, as well as the additional movement speed from Windchaser's Boots, Yueye City was not lacking in talented players of its own. Thieves chasing with Fleetfoot and Archers with all-Agility builds were able to attain Gu Fei's movement speed without much trouble, provided that they had decent equipment themselves. Furthermore, some of these Archers had fired off arrows with Homing Projectile while in pursuit. Svelte Dancer was able to ignore the damage from these arrows given her superior equipment, but Gu Fei had to slow down whenever he turned to deal with them, allowing his pursuers to close the gap between them.

I really got burned playing with fire this time! Gu Fei reflected. He was in his current predicament precisely because he had underestimated the mob's strength too much; he was sure to drown beneath this sea of commoners' attacks now.

Fortunately, Svelte Dancer showed great solidarity in this crucial moment and did not abandon him to his devices. Svelte Dancer was hopping mad once she discovered that Gu Fei was steadily lagging behind her while their pursuers were steadily catching up to them, "Why are you so slow?!" With that, she turned around and dashed over to Gu Fei.

"Why did you come back? Save yourself!" Gu Fei said.

"You're such an idiot!" Svelte Dancer grabbed a hold of Gu Fei as she took out a scroll from her dimensional pocket with her free hand. A mystical breeze suddenly emerged as the scroll bathed the ground where they stood with its white light. The instant the teleportation array completely formed, the two disappeared in a flash of light.

"You caused me to waste my Teleportation Scroll because of your slowness; it's my last one, too!" Svelte Dancer abruptly let go of Gu Fei and pointed her finger right at his nose after they materialized.

“Where did you get that item, anyway?” Gu Fei asked.

“It was a quest reward; there’s nowhere to buy it even if you’ve got coins!” Svelte Dancer said.

“I’m sure we’ll get an opportunity in the future,” Gu Fei consoled her before asking, “Where are we, by the way? We can’t have been sent to another city, right?” He checked their coordinates.

“You wish. There’s a limit to how far the teleportation scroll can move us, so it definitely can’t send us to another city or region. We are still somewhere in Yueye City,” Svelte Dancer said.

“Why is this sort of teleportation so inconsiderate, though? Can’t it just put us on solid ground or something?” Gu Fei asked as he checked their surroundings.

“That’s why it’s called Random Teleportation!” Svelte Dancer was annoyed.

The two had very inhumane materialized atop a tree in the middle of the woods. Gu Fei’s Midnight Spirit Robe was caught by a tree branch and he dangled rather precariously, as if he would fall at any moment. Svelte Dancer was just right across him; she looked to be stable, yet the branch she was caught on was visibly bending, straining from her weight. This meant that her situation was far more precarious than his, and Gu Fei involuntarily shut his eyes as he yelled, “SVELTY!”

“What?”

“You’re about to fall off!”

“Ahhh...” Svelte Dancer cried out shrilly as she lowered her head to look down. She was eight meters off the ground; falling now would surely hurt. She suddenly had the urge to grab Gu Fei. It was unknown, though, whether she intended for Gu Fei to help her or to drag him down with her.

“Stop fidgeting!” Gu Fei advised. The branch had yet to break, but Svelte Dancer’s hood slipped off of it due to her struggling, and

she screamingly fell down.

The fall was torturous, but the damage it dealt was insignificant. Svelte Dancer moaned for a while before she got up. Raising her head, she saw Gu Fei still dangling in the tree branch precariously.

“Dislodge yourself from that branch! I’ll catch you!” Svelte Dancer said aloud as she stretched her two arms out.

“No need for that!” Gu Fei did not believe the Thief Svelte Dancer could hold his weight. Perhaps, the Warrior June’s Rain would be able to.

“You can’t possibly dangle up there forever!” Svelte Dancer admonished.

Gu Fei did not argue with her. Very slowly, he reached inside his dimensional pocket for a banana.

“The heck! How can you think of eating at a time like this?!” Svelte Dancer was ruffled.

“I need mana!” Gu Fei explained, advising, “You should recover what you can, too!” Peeling the banana’s skin off, he slowly brought it up his mouth to eat.

Gu Fei recovered a bit of his mana shortly after, and he promptly shook his body vigorously, loosening himself off the tree branch. Halfway down, Gu Fei cast Blink and landed stably on the ground. He then retrieved another piece of fruit and munched on it to fill up the rest of his mana.

“We’re not too far from Yueye City, so if any of those men chase after us, they’ll be upon us pretty soon,” Svelte Dancer said as she checked their coordinates.

“Even if those men from before give up chasing us, others will surely come for our heads. What’s your PK value right now?” Gu Fei asked.

“I’ve got 23 PK points. You?”

“I’ve got 24 PK points.” Gu Fei’s ability to kill sharply declined when he ran out of mana, almost letting Svelte Dancer surpass him.

“We need to clear off our PK value; otherwise, we can’t stay in Yueye City.” Gu Fei finally realized how incompatible Yueye City was to PK maniacs like him.

“We have to go to the Bounty Assignment Hall,” Svelte Dancer said.

“That’s quite dangerous. Ha ha ha...” Gu Fei stated rather feebly.

“What other solutions do we have?” Svelte Dancer asked.

“Return to Yunduan City.” Gu Fei suggested, as it was exactly what he had done when he had accumulated a lot of PK points in the past.

“I can enter the Bounty Assignment Hall since I have Stealth, but what about you?” Svelte Dancer asked.

“Hmm... Guess I’ll check and find out what’s happening over there first!” Gu Fei opened the mercenary channel and saw that the others had been sending him streams of messages. All were asking for his status.

“We used a Random Teleportation scroll that sent us somewhere in Yueye City. I currently have 24 PK points that I need to remove. How are things over by the Bounty Assignment Hall?” Gu Fei typed out.

“Still as busy as before,” they replied.

“That makes things rather troublesome!” Gu Fei sighed.

“Mhm. Why don’t you look for Dusky Cloud and his gang? If he utilizes the Ten Guild Alliance to protect you, I doubt anyone will continue to bother you,” Brother Assist suggested.

“No need for that,” Young Master Han interjected icily, saying, “Give me a vantage point and I’ll direct you safely to the Bounty

Assignment Hall. All you have to do is fight your way in to obtain your mission. You can do that, right?”

“But this is a world map!” Brother Assist was astonished. They naturally knew what Young Master Han was trying to get at, but this map’s size was incomparable to the ones they had had during the mercenary PvP tournament. Those coordinates were limited in the hundreds, yet the city map’s coordinates were way larger.

“That’s nothing. It is just like before; as long as I know the coordinates of a few locations within the city, I can easily narrow things down appropriately,” Young Master Han was not fazed by this.

“But there’s clearly a simpler solution to this!” Brother Assist exclaimed.

“It’s not like we have anything better to do now, anyway,” Young Master Han reasoned.

“Miles, why don’t you decide what to do?” Brother Assist finally asked. Ultimately, this was still his decision to make.

“Look for a vantage point, then!” Gu Fei replied.

Chapter 293 - Super Mario

Anyone could tell with a glance where the highest point in Yueye City was.

At the heart of the city, and near the tavern Young Master's Elite had just visited to drink liquor with Dusky Cloud and friends, there stood a tower way taller than [Yunduan](#) City's clock tower. Although it clearly had a clock face as well, the system had called it the Tower to differentiate it from the other in-game cities' clock towers.

Without a moment's delay, Young Master Han set forth toward the Tower as he casually called War Without Wounds to accompany him. In a city where PvP was literally its lifeblood, a lone Priest walking around was a rare sight, as the non-combat job class was too easy to bully. Young Master Han might hold himself in high esteem, but he certainly had no wish to become somebody's punching bag.

"Ahhh... I wanted to do something more meaningful!" War Without Wounds was extremely unwilling to become a bodyguard once more.

"Just give up; do you even have the movement speed to keep up with them?" Young Master Han pointed at Sword Demon and Royal God Call as he said this, and War Without Wounds wordlessly agreed.

Sword Demon and Royal God Call remained by the street, prepared to lend assistance if the need arose. Brother Assist left for the Bounty Assignment Hall; after all, no matter how high a vantage point was, Young Master Han would have no way of peering through the walls.

Gu Fei only began his hike back to the city from the woods once he received Young Master Han's message informing him that all preparations had been made.

The Amethyst Rebirth ladies were actually asking about their situation as well and if they could help them in any way, but Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer shared the same view that these ladies could hardly provide them assistance. Svelte Dancer had even suggested using the ladies to divert their potential enemies' attention through the honey-pot scheme, but Gu Fei absolutely vetoed it.

Yueye City was a paradise for manly pursuits; most players only had eyes for blood and killing. One of the two most hated players in the city was the beauty Vast Lushness, but when did any of them show mercy toward her due to it? Svelte Dancer was also a beautiful lady, but did any of those players who had obtained her 'Bounty Mission' show leniency in their attacks?

Once Young Master Han reached the top of the Tower, he approvingly regarded the bird's eye view before him, "Yueye City's skyline is much clearer. People can only see clouds when they look down from Yunduan City's clock tower."

"That's why it's called Yunduan¹ City!" War Without Wounds, who was standing by his side, also took in the view before him. Almost instantly, he felt dizzy and his heart rose to his throat; War Without Wounds' entire body suddenly went weak and he slumped to the ground like jelly, his arms quickly grabbing a hold of the stone pillar next to him.

Young Master Han eyed him in annoyance. War Without Wounds calmed himself and said, "I think I'm sick."

"Huh?"

"Seems like I've gained fear of heights," War Without Wounds clarified.

"I know. You've had quite the journey crossing the Oolong Mountain Range." It was rare to see Young Master Han sympathize with another person. It was said that those that had fallen into the abyss lost a whole level when they died. War Without Wounds did not fall, yet tethering precariously between life and death for two

separate segments of that stretch of road created a psychological shadow in his mind.

This is a serious issue since such trauma could be brought into reality. Who knew when War Without Wounds would find himself standing high up in an office building in reality and his sight from it would cause his legs to buckle just like today?

War Without Wounds tightly hugged the pillar as he slowly stepped away from the edge, returning to the center of the Tower.

Young Master Han paid attention to him no more as he studied the city's layout while talking to others on the mercenary channel. The coordinates for the Bounty Assignment Hall, Gu Fei's current location, the players' heading direction from the Bounty Assignment Hall... All these were information he needed for the operation. However, just as he was drawing up a plan, Young Master Han suddenly froze and said to War Without Wounds, "We're going down."

"What?"

"There's no need for us to guide him."

"Why is that?" War Without Wounds asked, puzzled.

"He can get there without my help." Young Master Han started descending from the Tower as he fired off a message to Gu Fei: "There's no need for me to guide you."

"Oh?" Gu Fei was confused.

"Svelte Dancer has Stealth, so she won't have any problems getting there. As for you, you can just travel through the rooftops," Young Master Han explained.

"Rooftops... Oh, that's true!" Gu Fei thought that this was a great idea. It was not because he would have an easier time hiding from the bounty hunters by staying on the rooftops, though. The truth of the matter was that he might be the only player capable of navigating freely across the rooftops, and this was entirely due to

his possession of the Blink skill! There was no way all the rooftops in the city would be conveniently connected, so there would naturally be some rooftops that were too far or too high from others for people to leap across. Only by utilizing Blink would anyone be able to cross these gaps safely.

As such, the bounty hunters would have no way of chasing after him using the rooftops. If they were to chase him from the streets below... Gu Fei could directly cross streets with the roofs found in the middle; how would others keep up to him if they had to take a detour around the streets and alleys?

“We’ll go to the Bounty Assignment Hall to keep an eye on things for you,” Young Master Han said.

“Got it,” Gu Fei replied.

He and Svelte Dancer were on their way to the city. Yueye City’s outskirts were open and vast, but thanks to Gu Fei’s experience being hunted, he knew how to play around the coordinates that refreshed every five minutes.

However, in this city where doing ‘Bounty Mission’ was the rage, it was quite possible that a few enthusiastic PvPers had achieved more than a hundred kills to their name, which meant that they were also given the prize for completing a hundred ‘Bounty Mission’: Windchaser’s Emblem. With that item, the coordinates would refresh every minute. Fortunately, there were few bloodthirsty players even in Yueye City, and most of the players were doing ‘Bounty Mission’ mainly to clear off their PK value... Moreover, few people were capable of clearing off at least 100 PK points like that.

Given Gu Fei’s and Svelte Dancer’s movement speed, the only job classes that could compete with them were Archers and Thieves. There were simply not enough players possessing these job classes to chase after the two across such a wide area. Furthermore, even among these two job classes, only those who had focused their

points to Agility or acquired equipment boosting movement speed could trouble Gu Fei. Meanwhile, Svelte Dancer would likely have no issue dealing with anyone given how she currently was the top player across the entire gaming server.

It was unavoidable for them to bump into others along the way as they circled and took detours, though, so when this happened, they would decisively take down the person. With their PK value that was already well into the twenties, what was an additional PK point? The people gathered in larger groups as they drew nearer to the city. Players continued to run out of the city, but the two were unsure whether these people were hot on their heels or simply heading out to grind.

“Let’s split up here!” Gu Fei told Svelte Dancer.

“Okay. Be careful!” Svelte Dancer agreed.

“You, too,” Gu Fei said.

Svelte Dancer quickly activated Stealth and disappeared from view. Gu Fei darted toward the city gates while vigilantly eyeing the players leaving the city. It was possible that there would be players among them looking to capture him.

As expected, the moment Gu Fei made it to the city gate, three men followed his every movement. These bounty hunters could tell that he was their target. Since they had picked up the ‘Bounty Mission’, they could clearly see Gu Fei’s serial number hovering above his head. The others might be their helpers who were too lazy to pick up the ‘Bounty Mission’ themselves; since they could not see his serial number, they reacted much slower to Gu Fei’s appearance. Once their friends signal them about his appearance, almost one fifth of the players present sprinted straight toward Gu Fei.

“That’s a lot, alright...” Gu Fei mumbled to himself. Fortunately, he had already prepared for such a situation. With his nimble movement speed, Gu Fei was able to enter the city before the

enemies could even get into their formation. Gu Fei played it safe by taking down one of the players that were closer to him during this sequence.

“It’s 27 now...” Gu Fei tallied his PK points. Once he passed the city gate, the players pointing him out increased as well. He did not hurry in the direction of the Bounty Assignment Hall. Instead, he looked for a disused side alley and dove straight toward it. Gu Fei briefly inspected all the players chasing after him. Noting that he still held the upper hand when it came to movement speed, he temporarily stopped worrying about anyone catching up to him.

But before he got too far ahead, other players began popping out of the other alley entrance he was running toward. These players streamed in to block Gu Fei’s forward advance. With men on both sides, everyone was convinced that Gu Fei had nowhere to run. Thus, they began showing hostility toward one another.

There was simply not enough to go around! Many players got the ‘Bounty Mission’ for Gu Fei, but only one of them could complete it. Thinking that Gu Fei had no escape, everyone started warily eyeing one another.

Gu Fei smiled brightly. Gathering all these people into this alley was precisely what he wanted to do. He waved goodbye to the people slowly creeping toward him from the front and back, lifted his finger, and cast his Blink, teleporting himself on a nearby rooftop.

This rooftop was so high that the average player would be unable to climb up easily. Gu Fei started running freely on the rooftop. The players in the alley stared at him for the longest time before returning to their senses and trying all sorts of ways to get on the rooftop as well. Some had Warriors toss others up the roof, while some Fighters tried doing the same thing with Seismic Toss. A few even tried forming a human pyramid to get up there layer by layer! Those bounty hunters with ranged job classes unleashed skills as they chased after Gu Fei from below the streets.

Gu Fei had already anticipated his pursuers' actions. This first set of rooftops he teleported to was just his starting point, and Gu Fei was running about purely to wait for his Blink's cooldown to end. By the time several players managed to make it up the roof he was on, a full minute had passed. Gu Fei sprinted toward the furthest end of this street, leaped off, and activated Blink halfway through his jump. Crossing the eight-meter-wide road, Gu Fei safely reached the rooftop right across.

All the players were utterly dumbfounded right now. It was just as Young Master Han and Gu Fei had predicted; none of them had a way to chase after Gu Fei anymore. Some players attempted to run ahead toward a rooftop further away, climbing up it in hopes of staging an ambush to Gu Fei there. How would they know what route Gu Fei intended to take, though? In the end, those players simply wasted their time climbing on that rooftop.

The countless players Gu Fei had left in the dust helplessly watched him sprint far ahead. Running and leaping... They saw his figure shrink in the distance. At this very moment, everyone was instantly reminded of the character in the video game that they had played when they were younger: Super Mario.

Yunduan (云端) literally translates to 'cloud fringe', which can be understood as a layer of clouds.

Chapter 294 - Taking Advantage of the Mission

The airspace of Yueye City had become a place where Gu Fei could roam freely. He did not immediately head over to the Bounty Assignment Hall, since he was worried that the bounty hunters would figure out his intention and be able to prepare an ambush for him at the destination. Instead, he loitered on the rooftops for a good while, which had caused even Svelte Dancer to feel impatient: “What are you dawdling around for?! I’ve already obtained myself a ‘Bounty Mission’!”

Svelte Dancer had traveled all the way to the Bounty Assignment Hall in Stealth mode. Interacting with the system to get a mission would normally cancel a Thief’s Stealth, but Svelte Dancer fortunately had the Shadow Walk skill! Ten seconds were more than enough for her to grab a mission. And while it was inevitable for someone to step or bump into her given how packed the hall was, her Shadow Walk basically prevented any issues from cropping up because of that.

Moreover, this move of hers had caused quite a few fights to erupt inside the hall. These players were unaware that a Thief in Stealth mode was passing by and accidentally bumped into them, so their immediate reaction was to glare daggers at the nearest players to them. Given the mentality of most players in Yueye City, unless the players glaring had the Ten Guild Alliance’s emblem, it was almost certain that such an act would result in a few repercussions.

The perpetrator, Svelte Dancer, completely ignored all this and merely exited the Bounty Assignment Hall with her mana spent. Although Shadow Walk had run its course, her Stealth state remained, so not one bounty hunter managed to pinpoint her exact location. It could be said that this sojourn of hers had been

extremely easy.

Gu Fei had even met with Sword Demon and Royal God Call in hopes of either of them lending Svelte Dancer his Windchaser's Emblem. Royal God Call was most agreeable to this once he learned that the beauty Svelte Dancer was the one who wanted to use it. Arranging a location for a covert meet-up, Royal God Call handed over his Windchaser's Emblem to Svelte Dancer. Instead of thanking him, she asked, "Are you selling this?"

Royal God Call was taken aback, but he still consciously answered, "How much are you offering for it?"

"How much do you want for it?" Svelte Dancer asked.

Royal God Call hesitated. The value of Windchaser's Emblem differed from person to person; a PK maniac like Gu Fei would consider it a treasure, and a player in Yueye City might find the item rather convenient given this place's PvP culture, but the average law-abiding player would certainly not think of this item as having any value.

Royal God Call was considered as someone who would not consciously look for trouble, but he still felt that owning this rare equipment somewhat demonstrated his value as an expert. Just as he was about to reject her offer, Svelte Dancer actually proposed, "Will you sell it for 500 gold coins?"

Royal God Call immediately reached his hand out, "Sold!" All it took was 500 gold coins for Royal God Call to sell out his dignity as an expert....

Equipping Windchaser's Emblem, Svelte Dancer filled up her mana by consuming fruit and proceeded to search for her 'Bounty Mission' target while in Stealth mode.

Gu Fei started heading toward the Bounty Assignment Hall at his fastest speed after receiving messages from Sword Demon and the others who were currently at the establishment.

Young Master Han reckoned that this was the perfect opportunity for Gu Fei to obtain a 'Bounty Mission' since the Bounty Assignment Hall was currently in chaos due to Svelte Dancer's Shadow Walk. Gu Fei used Blink to arrive at the establishment's entrance and darted inside to obtain a 'Bounty Mission' with practiced ease. His heart skipped a beat when he saw the Wanted Players list while he was obtaining a mission, but he had no time to properly process this, since the players inside the hall had begun to take notice of his arrival and were now calling for their comrades to help attack him.

Gu Fei wove through the crowd and exited the Bounty Assignment Hall. Turning around and lifting his sword, he cast Electric Wall right by the hall entrance.

Two players that came right out the door after Gu Fei were instantly trapped, convulsing in the crackling electricity and drawing everyone's attention. Gu Fei took advantage of this confusion to escape the premise. Fleeing to a relatively quiet place, he quickly sent Svelte Dancer a message: "Hey. Your 'Bounty Mission' isn't someone with 27 PK points, right?"

"Of course, not! Aren't you the one with 27 PK points?" Svelte Dancer asked back.

"Whew! That's good, then," Gu Fei sighed in relief. He had spotted a target with 26 PK points as he was selecting 'Bounty Mission' just then and had almost picked it up by reflex. Fortunately, he realized in time that that target would most likely be Svelte Dancer, but he started worrying whether Svelte Dancer had obtained the 'Bounty Mission' for him without realizing it. That was why he had immediately asked her about this upon successfully fleeing from the Bounty Assignment Hall.

Thankfully, it seemed that women were truly more attentive to details than men. Had any of those men of Young Master's Elite been in her shoes, they would have most likely forgotten about this particular detail and immediately picked up the target with the

highest PK value.

Feeling reassured on his end, Gu Fei made a beeline for his bounty target. A long trail of men was still chasing after him, so Gu Fei once more relied on the rooftop route to travel about. His target was fortunately located at the heart of the city, so he managed to make his way toward his target in relative ease. However, just as he reached his target's location, he witnessed a scene that almost left him tears!

Fugitive 56197 and his friends were walking down the street when a shrill cry was heard. The target looked behind him but saw no one there. In the end, he disappeared in a flash of white light with eyes full of confusion and shock.

The man's buddies were at a total loss at what had just happened. Looking around them, they finally spotted Gu Fei who was standing on a rooftop. They pointed at him in unison and lambasted, "Oi! Are you the one who killed our friend?!"

"Would be great if it really were me." Gu Fei smiled wryly. He was too lazy to explain himself to them and merely turned to leave while sending Svelte Dancer this message: "Hey! Did you pick up Fugitive 56197 with PK value of 5 points?"

"Yes, I did!" Svelte Dancer was pleased with herself, "I figured you would choose that person who topped the list, so I chose the second person; this way our targets won't clash!"

"I knew it!" Gu Fei sighed. Killing someone without a trace... Svelte Dancer was possibly the only player capable of doing so with her Shadow Walk skill. Any Thief capable of assassinating a target with one strike would surely reveal himself or herself to the victim when his or her Stealth got forcefully canceled. There would have been no way for that man to die without knowing his assailant if the attacker had not been Svelte Dancer!

Gu Fei could only lament that he did not put much thought into things when he picked up this 'Bounty Mission'. He had assumed

that Svelte Dancer would pick the first target on the Wanted Players list, so he had picked this particular target to avoid clashing with her.

That was when Svelte Dancer realized something: “Hang on. Did you pick this target, too?!” There was no way Gu Fei would know such detail if he did not choose this target as well.

“What else?” Gu Fei replied glumly, saying, “Once you pick your next ‘Bounty Mission’, tell me its serial number.”

“Tsk!” Svelte Dancer expressed her disapproval. Having completed this ‘Bounty Mission’, she promptly activated the teleportation skill of Windchaser’s Emblem and used Shadow Walk. Once more, she was able to easily pick up a ‘Bounty Mission’.

“What’s your serial number?” Gu Fei asked.

“115493,” Svelte Dancer reported over.

“Got it,” Gu Fei replied as he once more made his way to the Bounty Assignment Hall.

His utilization of the rooftops to travel about in Yueye City made the locals feel mystified over his existence and wonder about his identity. Gu Fei rushed inside the Bounty Assignment Hall, picked up another ‘Bounty Mission’, and dashed off to accomplish it.

Gu Fei eventually managed to complete two ‘Bounty Mission’, lowering his PK value to 17 points. Meanwhile Svelte Dancer completed three ‘Bounty Mission’, and she was now down to 11 PK points.

The other five men of Young Master’s Elite thought at first that the two would require their assistance, yet they saw the two handling everything quite expertly. The five men who had originally positioned themselves vigilantly by the entrance to the Bounty Assignment Hall eventually became lax, squatting by the opposite wall all lined up. If any of these men had bowls lying in

front of them, others would probably mistake them for people begging for alms.

Only Young Master Han, who was standing upright, seemed to be taking this matter seriously. After watching Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer do 'Bounty Mission' for quite a few times, he nudged the others with his foot, "Get up. Things are about to get messy."

"Eh?" The rest looked at him questioningly.

Just as Young Master Han had expected, the entrance to the Bounty Assignment Hall suddenly stirred as people began arriving. It was as if the place had become the new gathering point for these players. From their stance, it was apparent that they were waiting for someone, and that someone was most likely Gu Fei or Svelte Dancer.

These people had gotten the 'Bounty Mission' for Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer. Seeing the two's PK value rapidly decrease, they immediately realized that Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer were doing 'Bounty Mission' as well! Gu Fei thought that using Blink was enough to confuse these bounty hunters, yet he forgot to consider what these men would think upon seeing their PK value rapidly decrease. There was just no way to quickly lower one's PK value besides doing 'Bounty Mission'.

"Tell Svelte Dancer not to head back to the Bounty Assignment Hall once she completes her current mission. And the same goes for you," Young Master Han sent Gu Fei this message.

"Why?" Gu Fei asked.

"The bounty hunters after you guys have gathered here upon noticing how low you two's PK value has become," Young Master Han explained.

Gu Fei finally understood what Young Master Han meant and he quickly relayed this information to Svelte Dancer, who was quick-witted enough to figure it out as well.

The whole city was swarming with their pursuers just moments ago, but it suddenly became devoid of such people at the moment. The trail of people that they could not seem to lose no matter how hard they tried had all disappeared.

“What now?” Svelte Dancer asked Gu Fei.

“Uh... Let’s just take a break in a tavern for now!” Gu Fei suggested.

“Great idea!”

Following this conversation, the two met up and randomly chose a tavern to have a few drinks. While the two were happily imbibing their drinks, many players were forlornly waiting for them at the Bounty Assignment Hall.

These players were actually competitors, so none of them thought well of one another. This was the first time these people realized just how many people had picked up the same ‘Bounty Mission’ now that all of them were gathered together by the entrance to the Bounty Assignment Hall. The first thing they would ask before starting to chat one another up was: “124785 or 125987?”

Serial number 124785 was Gu Fei, while serial number 125987 was Svelte Dancer. After asking around, these people learned that there was actually an equal division of bounty hunters between the two bounty targets. Some simply targeted the person on top of the Wanted Players list, while others picked up the second person on it after thinking that many people would likely choose the top fugitive. Everyone looked at one another, uncertain of what to do.

Sword Demon, Brother Assist, Royal God Call, and War Without Wounds were currently at a loss as well, finally asking Young Master Han, “There’s no way we can take care of all these men, can we?”

“What are you talking about? Just watch!” Young Master Han

folded his arms and leaned on the wall with the others following suit.

Shortly after, several players began to leave. Seeing many people competing for the two targets, those players that were not confident of besting the others for the kill decided to give up on this 'Bounty Mission'. More than half of the gathered players left the area, and plenty of those that remained were sitting on the fence.

At this moment, those who had been closely monitoring Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer's coordinates noticed that the two had not changed location for a really long time. Remembering those that had left earlier, these men's expression quickly changed. They leaned in and whispered to one another. Before long, more began to sneak out of the hall.

Young Master Han laughed derisively as he faced the others and lectured, "See that? It is as I said: nothing can be accomplished without unity." With that, he sent Gu Fei this message: "Alright. You two can come back now."

Chapter 295 - Quick Mission Completion

Gu Fei was relaxing in a system-operated tavern when he received Young Master Han's message. He immediately informed Svelte Dancer of this and the two proceeded to activate their Windchaser's Emblem, disappearing from the tavern in a flash of white light. Those players who had noticed that the two's coordinates had not changed for the longest time hurried over to the tavern to catch either of them. Unfortunately, they did not manage to reach the place in time. When the coordinates refreshed again, these bounty hunters saw that the two's position had finally changed. The experienced players among them quickly deduced, "D*mn! They have Windchaser's Emblem as well!"

A few bounty hunters were still in the Bounty Assignment Hall when Svelte Dancer and Gu Fei teleported over, but their number was no longer a threat for the two fighting experts. Swiftly handing in their respective missions and picking up another, Gu Fei's PK value was now down to 12 points, while Svelte Dancer was down to 6 points.

Plenty of these players were no longer eager to chase after the two, since they felt that they were just wasting their time with them. Some of them were even hoping for the two to quickly clear off their PK value so that they could pick up new 'Bounty Mission'.

Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer left to hunt their respective targets, while Young Master Han and the rest stayed right outside the Bounty Assignment Hall.

"There shan't be any more issues, right?" Having squatted for so long, Brother Assist finally stood up and was now massaging his numb thighs.

"Mmm..." Young Master Han gave a vague affirmation. He then stared straight ahead in a way that suggested that he was waiting for someone or something.

“What else could there be?” the others asked Young Master Han this upon seeing the far-off look on his face.

Young Master Han inclined his head to a certain direction. Looking in the indicated direction, they saw Dusky Cloud with a horde of men rushing over. Without a word, these new arrivals charged inside the Bounty Assignment Hall. Plenty of curse words were soon heard echoing from within the hall. In no time at all, several players emerged from the hall with their hands on their heads and eyes filled with fear.

Dusky Cloud and his compatriots came out of the Bounty Assignment Hall after. His steely gaze swept through the area, and when Dusky Cloud spotted several players dazedly standing by the side, he immediately pointed at them, “What are you guys doing here?”

“Mi – Mission...” these players stuttered and then froze up, clearly unsure of how they had offended such a large horde of men.

“Mission, my *ss! No ‘Bounty Mission’ for you lot! Scram!” Dusky Cloud chased away all these players. Only then did his gaze shift to the five men squatting by a wall and made his way over to them. “How’s everything? Is Miles bro alright?” Dusky Cloud asked with worry apparent in his voice.

“He’s fine!” Brother Assist answered for everyone, saying, “His PK value will be cleared off soon!”

“Why didn’t you inform us about this and let us intervene?!” Dusky Cloud asked.

The Ten Guild Alliance naturally had men that were clearing off their PK value through the ‘Bounty Mission’ as well. In fact, some of them were among those that were chasing after Gu Fei. Since the Ten Guild Alliance had over four thousand men, a few of them were bound to not know of who Gu Fei was.

It was only when a Ten Guild Alliance member who knew of Gu

Fei's appearance had come face to face with him that the 'Super Mario' who had taken the city by storm was found out to actually be Thousand Miles Drunk. Hurrying to inform the Ten Guild Alliance of the matter, Dusky Cloud hastily rallied his force to aid Gu Fei.

The Ten Guild Alliance was basically Yueye City's tyrant organization. Dusky Cloud's men quickly gained control of the Bounty Assignment Hall and they turned away any players, telling them to return at a later time. When would that 'later time' be? It would of course be once Gu Fei cleared off all his PK value.

Gu Fei and Svelte Dancer did not know of this at first; when Gu Fei disposed of his latest target and teleported himself to the Bounty Assignment Hall, he was taken aback by its strangely empty hallways. Exiting the hall to chase after his target, he saw a pack of players standing right outside.

Gu Fei's heart leaped; why did his fellow mercenaries not inform him of this bunch of players blocking the way out? Did they think everything was over and ran off to do their things, instead?

As he was about to charge forward and fight the players, someone from the pack suddenly shouted, "Miles bro is back!"

Everyone turned to look. Dusky Cloud emerged from this crowd and approached Gu Fei, grasping his hand warmly, "Miles bro, it's been tough on you."

"Ah... Not really," Gu Fei replied, feeling surprised.

"These m*th*rf*ck*rs of Yueye City just love clearing off their PK value. Honestly, I don't even see the point in doing so. Just look at me; I've never bothered to clear off my PK value at all!" Dusky Cloud declared.

"That's true," Gu Fei casually agreed. Understanding that these men had come here with good intentions, he expressed gratitude. He then said, "I'm about to finish clearing off my PK value. No

need to busy yourselves with this matter; it's fine for you guys leave."

"How many is left?" Dusky Cloud asked.

"Just 7 PK points!" the men behind answered for him. It seemed that quite a handful of them had gotten Gu Fei as their 'Bounty Mission'.

"That's two more missions! We'll help you keep watch here," Dusky Cloud said.

"No need to go through such trouble," Gu Fei refused.

"We are brothers here; what's there to be courteous about?" Dusky Cloud was adamant.

Gu Fei could only accept his offer. He was about to send Svelte Dancer a message to prevent any misunderstanding when the door behind him opened and he heard her exclaim, "Sh*t! I'm surrounded!"

By the time Gu Fei looked backward, Svelte Dancer had already activated Stealth. He hurriedly shouted, "Don't do anything! They're on our side!"

Silence pervaded as everyone looked blankly at the empty space. Svelte Dancer's red figure slowly faded into view; she was holding a dagger which was actually inches away from Dusky Cloud's neck. It seemed that she was about to lop his head off. "Friends of yours?" Svelte Dancer blinked.

"Yeah!" Gu Fei went over, lowered her dagger, and pulled her away, "Carry on with your 'Bounty Mission'!"

Dusky Cloud could still feel the whip of air around his neck. Had it not been for Gu Fei's timely shout, Dusky Cloud's neck might have been reaped open by Svelte Dancer's dagger. As a Thief, his heart was beset with bewilderment by what he had just experienced. To be able to move so quickly despite being in Stealth mode... Just who was this person?

“How may I address this heroine?” Dusky Cloud respectfully asked as he went forward.

“Svelte Dancer,” Svelte Dancer introduced herself.

“Oh...” Everyone was in awe. This bunch of ruffians had naturally heard of this number one pay-to-win gamer, who also currently held the title of being the top player of Parallel World.

“Okay. Time to go!” Gu Fei waved to the group as he dragged Svelte Dancer off.

Svelte Dancer was down to her final PK point, allowing her to clear her PK value with this last mission; Gu Fei’s 7 PK points were also quickly resolved with two more missions, finally settling the storm that had thrown the entire city into a tizzy. Gu Fei thanked Dusky Cloud once more, and the Ten Guild Alliance’s men dispersed after. Svelte Dancer also left to look for the Amethyst Rebirth ladies. Gu Fei watched these two parties walk away and hefted the hem of his robe, heading back inside the Bounty Assignment Hall.

“What are you doing?” The five men of Young Master's Elite asked, stunned. They had almost grown roots for staying by that wall this whole time.

“‘Bounty Mission’, of course!” Gu Fei answered.

“Didn’t you just clear off all your PK points?” they asked.

Gu Fei turned his head over to look at them. The five realized the foolishness of their question; ‘Bounty Mission’ was Gu Fei’s main reason for playing the game, after all. “Tsk!” they each raised their middle fingers to Gu Fei before leaving as well.

At the same time, Traversing Four Seas’ negotiation by the prison also ended. They had gathered everyone in case of a fight breaking out, yet not a drop of blood had been shed all this while. After Oathless Sword paid the fee to the prison guard, what he got in return was not an item but a person—to be precise, what he got

was a dirty-faced, smelly NPC with disheveled hair. The NPC was wearing a coarse prisoner's outfit and his hands and legs were still bound with chains.

The quest's story became clearer with this. Apparently, this NPC was originally someone that held an important position from a certain city. The NPC was later found guilty of corruption charges and fled from that city. Unfortunately, it got captured in Yueye City and Traversing Four Seas was tasked of escorting this corrupted official back to its city to stand for trial.

Of course, only the Traversing Four Seas' members were privy to this information; the mercenaries had simply been standing by the prison entrance this whole time, feeling wholly unsatisfied for being unable to do anything more constructive. Oathless Sword was rather rueful as well. Had he known that this part of the quest would be accomplished easily, he would have just gotten the NPC by himself and called everyone to continue on the road. In the end, he had wasted time setting up formation and getting people ready for a non-existent fight. Furthermore, many players had already run off to god knew where once they had learned that the expedition would not resume today.

Without any choice left, he could only stick to their earlier decision of continuing the journey tomorrow. As all the mercenary groups dispersed, Oathless Sword realized that he had no idea on how to handle the NPC they had gotten. He could not possibly bring it along as they grinded levels. What would happen when he logged off, then?

Oathless Sword nearly fainted when he directly asked the NPC.

Grinding levels was not a problem, but if anything untoward happened to the NPC, causing its death, this guild quest would be considered as 'failed'. Beyond that, they would have to bring him back to the prison for temporary holding when they logged off. Since the prison was run by the system, it would naturally charge a fee for this service, which was exactly the cost Oathless Sword had

just paid to take the NPC out of the prison. This meant that Oathless Sword had not only wasted time but also money. What was worse was that he would have to pay money once more to retrieve this man tomorrow before they could resume their journey to the next city.

In his anger, Oathless Sword stuffed the NPC back into prison before leaving in a huff with his band of brothers.

Gu Fei was still happily doing 'Bounty Mission'. The PK value of Yueye City's players was substantial, with many of them having at least 5 PK points. If not for this, Svelte Dancer and Gu Fei would have no way of clearing off their high PK value so quickly.

The higher the PK value of a bounty target was, the more lucrative the reward was. Gu Fei's experience points and coin purse increased as his enjoyment reached an all-time high with the many fights he got himself into. There was nothing more he could ask for from the game at this point. When Sword Demon and the rest sent him a message asking if he would like to join them in some 'new' quests they had acquired, Gu Fei rejected them outright.

Even the quests in Yunduan City were 'new' to Gu Fei. When it came down to it, 'Bounty Mission' was still what he wanted to do the most!

Gu Fei slew the bounty target before him with this thought in mind. Quickly patting his Windchaser's Emblem, Gu Fei teleported himself to the Bounty Assignment Hall. Gu Fei currently had a piece of cloth covering his face like any other Yueye City player, so not one of the people in the Bounty Assignment Hall realized that he was the bounty target that they had been chasing after just a while ago.

Finally managing to squeeze his way to the mission window, Gu Fei sighed deeply in relief. This was one area of Yueye City's Bounty Assignment Hall that he felt dissatisfaction about: It was

always crowded with people.

Gu Fei handed over his completed mission and was about to obtain another when he heard a dinging sound. This was exactly the same sound he had heard before when he received a special reward upon mission completion.

Chapter 296 - Windchaser's Blessing

After the ding sound, the description of the reward and related achievement was displayed.

System notification: [Player Thousand Miles Drunk has cleared a total of 400 PK points through 'Bounty Mission'.]

This was a momentous achievement that only Gu Fei could achieve based on the system's following statement: [The system did not include the PK points that were used to clear off PK value for this achievement.]

No one would do 'Bounty Mission' if they did not have PK value to clear, and this was still true even for someone in Yueye City. Would anyone besides Gu Fei, who treated doing 'Bounty Mission' as a form of enjoyment, be able to accumulate 400 PK points of 'Bounty Mission'?

Finally, the system issued the reward: Windchaser's Blessing

Gu Fei believed that a lot of equipment was hidden within the 'Bounty Mission' system, and all of which would have the 'Windchaser' name to it. While the reward's name was rather conventional, he would still have to check the equipment's description to find out its function.

Windchaser's Blessing was a necklace. It had 'HP +60' and 'max HP +35%' traits...

Windchaser's Blessing's traits were almost a copy of Windchaser's Boots' 'movement +60' and 'movement speed +35%' traits, fully demonstrating how similar the series of Windchaser equipment from one another was. Moreover, the relation between 'HP' and 'max HP' had run by the same logic as the relation between 'movement speed' and 'movement'.

The inherent growth of a Mage's HP was only at the lowly rate of 0.85. Beginning with only 85 HP, every point added to Endurance

only increased it by 0.85. Currently, Gu Fei was at level 40. Including the 1 point that was automatically added to his Endurance each time he leveled up, his maximum HP was still 119. When he wore Eddie's Emblem, the additional 6 points to Endurance pushed his HP to 124. The decimal point of stats was often not shown in Parallel World, and theorycrafters, data analysts, and mathematicians were still needed to further research about its application in real-time combat.

Wearing the Windchaser's Blessing, Gu Fei's maximum HP would rise to 248, essentially doubling his original HP. Even an idiot could tell that Windchaser's Blessing was wondrous top-grade equipment just like Windchaser's Boots.

Sadly, Gu Fei did not see this accessory as such. As a player that had never experienced dropping a level due to dying, Gu Fei did not attach much importance to his lack of HP; instead, it was his low mana that had him feeling pain. It would be better if this item could increase my mana, instead, Gu Fei thought to himself as he inspected the necklace in his hand.

As for HP... Since nothing and no one had really been able to injure Gu Fei so far, why would he care about having more or less HP? With such a thought in mind, he merely proceeded to pick up a new 'Bounty Mission' and made his way out the Bounty Assignment Hall.

Nevertheless, the new equipment still had to be tested. Gu Fei wore the Windchaser's Blessing, but he did not feel any differently despite the HP increase. How useless, Gu Fei shook his head as he sprinted toward his new bounty target.

Nothing else happened when Gu Fei logged off later that night. Gu Fei went online a little earlier than usual the next day because of the lure of having 'Bounty Mission' targets with PK value of 4 or 5 points and because of wanting to check on Vast Lushness's situation.

Pulling up his friends list as soon as he got online, he sent Fireball, Sakurazaka Moony, and the others he saw online a message each. Nothing further happened to them, and they were relatively safe. Fireball even did his best to invite Gu Fei over to appreciate together with them the beauty of the three sultry ladies that they had supposedly found. Gu Fei rejected him as politely as he could.

With nothing else to do, Gu Fei naturally passed his time doing more 'Bounty Mission'. After a few bounties and when it was almost 7 P.M., he received a message from Young Master Han to gather with everybody by the prison entrance.

No tense atmosphere pervaded the air today unlike yesterday. Everyone was listlessly staring at Oathless Sword who was standing on a stair-step of the prison entrance. He originally wanted to say a few words but quickly changed his mind upon seeing all their expressions. Turning around to interact with the NPC to retrieve the prisoner from yesterday, he instantly won the appreciation of everyone present.

Since they were about to continue the expedition, Youthful Reflection and the various mercenary group leaders ensured that all those involved were properly accounted before 7 P.M. Yueye Ciy was truly a city of discord; plenty of them ran into trouble despite having only stayed in it for two days. Most of these were the result of conflicts over grinding spots, and it was mainly the mercenaries that got into trouble.

This was mainly due to Traversing Four Seas' members not being able to set their characters to respawn in any other cities while doing the guild quest: One death would cause them to fail the quest and automatically send them back to Yunduan City. Therefore, Oathless Sword and the other bigwigs of the guild repeatedly reminded the members about the importance of keeping a low profile and even told them to forget about being part of the number one guild in Yunduan City. By the looks of things, their

members listened, and they were able to achieve the desired result. Many of the mercenaries fought with the locals and suffered quite a few losses, yet Traversing Four Seas did not lose even one member to unnecessary skirmishes – something Oathless Sword and company were secretly delighted about.

It seemed that Yunduan City's players suffered similar fates at the hands of Yueye City's ruffians while grinding levels. These players swapped stories of their experiences being bullied as they felt nostalgia over the idyllic life that they had in Yunduan City. They all shared the same sentiment: they could not wait another minute to depart from this place.

People loved to compare with one another, and this lot of players began to compare who had the worst loss from this sojourn in Yueye City. In the end, Sakurazaka Moony's Great Hunting mercenary group won this; the forty-man mercenary group lost twenty-two men in a span of two days, taking the lead in terms of actual count and percentage of losses.

"You guys sure are intense! Just how many fights did you get yourselves into?!" someone exclaimed. Most of Yunduan City's players only had minor squabbles when they were snatching grinding spots, losing one or two men at most, and many immediately retreated once they saw their HP gauge turning red. It was already difficult to lose five or six people in just two days since a mercenary group would have to get into five or six different squabbles first. Using this logic, Sakurazaka Moony's group had been into twenty-two or so fights to lose that staggering number of men.

Sakurazaka Moony was not only reprehensible but also good at acting humble, placidly saying, "Not really. We merely had a minor misunderstanding with the Ten Guild Alliance here."

All were visibly moved by this, but they quickly began to jeer at Sakurazaka Moony's shameless bragging.

The Ten Guild Alliance was well-known even to those players not residing in Yueye City for being the largest organization in Parallel World. Although it was made up of ten different guilds, the Ten Guild Alliance was pretty much a large guild with over four thousand members. Even Traversing Four Seas, the number one guild in Yunduan City with seven hundred fifty members, was considered small when compared to the Ten Guild Alliance. For the small forty-man mercenary group led by Sakurazaka Moony to survive from this ‘minor misunderstanding’ and walk out of Yueye City almost freely was nothing short of unbelievable.

“Tsk! It’s fine if you don’t believe me.” Sakurazaka Moony did not wish to force his point, waving his hand dismissively and refusing to explain further.

The players continued to laugh even as they dispersed, ending the topic there and then.

Taking the main road leading out of the city, the expedition slowly made its way toward a small village. Gu Fei excitedly said to his fellow mercenaries, “This is Yeguang Village; it’s where my chain quest ended!”

“So this is the village that half the residents are Werewolves?” Brother Assist quickly pulled out his booklet to jot down this information.

“That’s right!” Gu Fei dragged Brother Assist to the side of the expedition, intending to point out to him the Werewolves among the passing NPCs. When Gu Fei first went to Yeguang Village for his chain quest, the human villagers and the Werewolf villagers treated him differently. Gu Fei still remembered the human forms that the few Werewolves he knew assumed. However, now that he was pointing each villager out, he could not seem to spot even one Werewolf villager that he was familiar with. Brother Assist had his booklet and quill at the ready to record things, yet Gu Fei oddly remained unforthcoming. As Brother Assist looked at him questioningly, someone from behind them suddenly said, “Hey!”

This caused the two of them to jump up a meter or two.

“Xiaoyu...” Gu Fei greeted after recovering himself.

June’s Rain excited said to Gu Fei, “We’re here at this village again!”

“Yeah!” Gu Fei answered with fake enthusiasm, his gaze roaming around.

“Do you still remember the secret of this village?” June’s Rain asked secretively.

“What?” Gu Fei was stumped.

June’s Rain cupped her hand to his ear and whispered, “Some of them are Werewolves!”

Gu Fei did not know whether to laugh or cry when he heard this; he once more fell for the mental trap that June’s Rain had unwittingly set. In some ways, June’s Rain was equally as scary as Young Master Han; the latter was due to his deep insight while the former was for her simple-mindedness, a level of thought – or lack thereof – that no one would understand without first-hand experience. Gu Fei felt he was still rather close to Young Master Han’s level of intellect, yet he was really far away when it came to June’s Rain.

“What? Did you forget about it?” June’s Rain asked, using her intellect to evaluate Gu Fei when she saw him speechless for a long time.

“Of course, I remember. Can’t you see I’m trying to locate the Werewolf villagers right now?” Gu Fei asked.

“You should look for me if you’re searching for Werewolves!” June’s Rain patted her chest proudly.

“Eh?” Gu Fei did not understand what she was getting at.

June’s Rain pulled out the quest booklet from her dimensional pocket and flipped it over to the page containing the data about the

Werewolf villagers in Yueye City's Yeguang Village. "Look here. Coordinates XXX, XXX! Villager Finn - Werewolf." After reciting the coordinates, she began to head to a different direction that the expedition was moving toward with Gu Fei and Brother Assist.

June's Rain reached the coordinates in just a few steps, but after walking around twice, she could still not find the Werewolf villager from the said area.

"Ah... What's going on?" June's Rain asked, her eyes sparkled with innocence.

"Let's look for another one!" Gu Fei took pity on her and pointed to another Werewolf villager she had noted down.

"Coordinates XXX, XXX. Villager Sammy - Werewolf," June's Rain muttered as she and the other two started walking toward the stated location. Once more, they arrived at a location without one NPC around.

"AHHHHH!" June's Rain did not even wait for Gu Fei to say a word and just proceeded to the next Werewolf villager she had noted down. There was at least a NPC in the indicated location this time, yet it was not the Werewolf villager that they were looking for. June's Rain talked to the NPC for five times, yet this villager insisted that its name was Lidur and not the Kundi she had listed on her booklet.

"I... Could I have remembered wrongly?" June's Rain scratched her head. She would usually make mistakes, so she did not have much confidence to begin with.

"I don't think that's the case," Gu Fei said.

"Then, what's going on?"

"That... It seems all the Werewolves are gone," Gu Fei answered with uncertainty.

"All the Werewolves are gone?" Brother Assist reiterated, albeit in a questioning tone. He had quietly been following the two all

this while.

Chapter 297 - Werewolf, Werewolf, where are you

Where were the Werewolves?

It was daytime in Parallel World right now. The Werewolf villagers should be standing by the side of the road like all the human villagers to contribute toward the atmosphere of the game. When Gu Fei could not point out any Werewolf villagers to Brother Assist, he just thought that perhaps those he remembered were not ‘on duty’, but now that even June’s Rain was having the same issue, he knew that something was amiss. They searched for three other villagers consecutively but did not find even one of them. Gu Fei searched his memory deeper, and he came to the realization that the number of villagers strolling about the village today seemed to be fewer than when he was here before.

“This way!” Gu Fei led the way, and June’s Rain and Brother Assist followed him closely. They arrived in front of a certain house.

June’s Rain looked down and glanced at her booklet before announcing, “Werewolf Wally!”

Gu Fei nodded his head. Although he did not know the NPC’s name, he was certain that this was the home of that burly Werewolf who had rewarded him his Moonlit Nightfalls. He’s clearly the leader of the Werewolves in this village, Gu Fei thought to himself as he pushed the door open with his hand.

“Ah! You’ve got to knock on the door first! Some NPCs get mad if you’re discourteous. What will we do if they don’t give us a quest?!” June’s Rain got flustered, but she quickly calmed down once she realized that no one was inside the house.

“Show me your little booklet,” Gu Fei said to June’s Rain.

Relying on June’s Rain’s booklet, the three broke into three

separate homes where Werewolf villagers were supposed to reside in, yet not one of them could be found.

Brother Assist surveyed the whole room as he brushed his fingertip over the tabletop, “There’s no dust. This means that they have left not too long ago.”

“You’re really smart!” June’s Rain praised Brother Assist, suggesting, “Let’s go ask the village chief!”

“Hey. They are about to head off already; do we really need to inquire about the Werewolves’ whereabouts at this time?” Brother Assist asked.

“Do you think the Werewolves’ disappearance has a connection with Traversing Four Seas’ guild quest?” Gu Fei asked.

“What sort of connection could there be?” Brother Assist asked back before muttering to himself, “It couldn’t possibly be an attack staged by the Werewolves, right? That would just be too ridiculous. Werewolves are level 70 monsters! How many Werewolves are living in this village, anyway?”

June’s Rain started counting the four-page worth of names in her booklet.

“No need to count,” Gu Fei stopped her, saying, “Let’s just go to the village chief and ask him.”

Locating the elderly village chief of Yeguang Village, Gu Fei was shocked to learn that this NPC still recognized him. The village chief even called him ‘Chosen Hero’ when they conversed. Gu Fei originally thought that since his chain quest had been completed, the NPCs in Yeguang Village would treat him just like any other players afterward. He had never expected the special treatment he received to persist even after the quest was completed.

However, it was only Gu Fei who found this to be strange. A person like June’s Rain who would often do quests was very used to such a situation. The NPCs were sure to treat a player differently

after completing a quest that could not be repeated. If a player was treated the same like before, then his or her quest had most likely failed, which meant that the player would have to try again....

“Chief Edwin,” Gu Fei courteously greeted the NPC. He then selected a few names from the booklet and asked him where those villagers were.

“Oh. They’ve left the village to hunt since the weather is so good today,” Chief Edwin informed them.

“Hunt? Where to?” Gu Fei pressed on.

“The forest? North of the village? Or perhaps up the mountain? I am not really sure,” Chief Edwin answered.

“Do they often go hunting like this?” Gu Fei continued to probe. Chief Edwin shook his head.

“See? This is unusual,” Gu Fei said to Brother Assist.

“The ‘north of the village’ happens to be in the same direction that our expedition is heading toward...” Brother Assist’s countenance quickly changed. “We should quickly catch up to them! This is a serious matter; these are level 70 monsters!”

“Send them a message, then!” Gu Fei suggested as he started running off.

The trio left the village chief’s abode and followed the main road leading north. Soon, they caught up to the rest of the troops that had halted their forward advance. Most players in the expedition were clueless about what was happening and were busy discussing with one another the reason why they had stopped moving forward.

The three core members of Traversing Four Seas, Oathless Sword, Youthful Reflection, and Gale Force, immediately went up to the three upon their arrival and addressed Brother Assist, “Brother Assist, you said that there are Werewolves waiting ahead.

Just what do you mean by that?”

Brother Assist relayed all the information he had gathered so far to Young Master Han, who then passed it on to Youthful Reflection. Now that this particular information had been said aloud, everyone started discussing the matter animatedly.

“You should ask him!” Brother Assist pushed Gu Fei to the front.

Youthful Reflection openly expressed his distaste toward this. He really disliked dealing with Gu Fei; Gale Force, who was beside him, showed uncertainty on how he should treat Gu Fei. Oathless Sword was the one who spoke in the end, “Miles bro, the Werewolves you speak of... What’s going on with that?”

“A while back, I came to Yeguang Village to do a quest,” Gu Fei began narrating, “In that village, half of the residents are Werewolves masquerading as humans. They live in harmony with the unsuspecting humans and do not wish to reveal their identity as Werewolves. Today, I discovered that not one of these Werewolves is in that village. We inquired around and discovered that they haven’t left for too long. The village chief said that they had left to hunt today – something that they have never done before. The place that these Werewolves headed to hunt is north of the village.”

“North. But that’s where we are heading to!” Oathless Sword exchanged glances with the two men beside him.

“So what you’re saying is that these Werewolves may have gone there to attack us?” Youthful Reflection was the military advisor of Traversing Four Seas, so he still had to talk in the end.

“That’s my guess.” Gu Fei could tell that Youthful Reflection was not really fond of him, and he shared this sentiment with him. He despised Youthful Reflection’s pettiness. You’ve only lost a match in the mercenary PvP tournament. Plenty of people have lost to us, yet you’re the only one being a sore loser about it!

Youthful Reflection scrutinized Yeguang Village, which was behind them. “This village isn’t particularly large; half of the villagers would be no more than a hundred or so Werewolves. Although they are level 70 monsters, we have a thousand-strong army on our side. It shouldn’t be so dangerous if we assign ten men to one Werewolf, right?”

“Depending on numerical superiority may work for other monsters, but it won’t for these Werewolves,” Gu Fei said.

“Oh?” Youthful Reflection eyed him contemptuously.

“Werewolves are really fast when it comes to their speed, and each of them possesses innate regeneration,” Gu Fei supplied.

He did not need to explain further, as all those present were skilled gamers and quickly understood what the two points meant. The Werewolves having fast speed meant that these players’ attacks might not connect and the Werewolves having innate regeneration meant that these players’ attacks would be useless if the damage was not high enough or applied with a consistent frequency.

The Werewolves were indeed a serious problem to consider. Unfortunately, Youthful Reflection had just treated Gu Fei curtly and brusquely, and it would just be plain awkward to suddenly do a one-eighty in his attitude toward Gu Fei. In the end, Oathless Sword once more stepped forward to mediate in the conversation, “Miles bro, what do you suggest we do, then?”

“My suggestion? I have none. I’m just informing you that there are Werewolves ahead. I’ll leave it up to you to deal with them,” Gu Fei replied.

Oathless Sword attempted to laugh this off as he said, “Miles bro, please don’t be bothered by the attitude of this comrade of mine. He is like that with everyone.”

Gu Fei did not know whether to laugh or cry at that. “I’m not

bothered by it, and I really don't have any suggestions for you. I just coincidentally found out about the Werewolves' disappearance in the village and thought that it might be related to your guild quest. I made it a point to inform you so that you guys can better prepare for any possible fight ahead."

"That's it?" Oathless Sword was taken aback.

"What else is there?" Gu Fei shrugged his shoulders.

"Rest up, then, Miles bro. We'll discuss this matter in detail first," Oathless Sword said.

"Go on, then!" Gu Fei waved them off, as if he were the boss here instead of Oathless Sword.

And so, all the players from Yunduan City took this moment to rest up. The possibility of a hundred or so Werewolves waiting for them ahead spread through the troops. With the Werewolves' quick speed and inherent regeneration, even if they were to fight them tooth and nail, the losses they would incur would surely be disastrous. Therefore, they must devise an appropriate battle plan. The Traversing Four Seas' core members and all the mercenary group leaders headed to a clearing beside the forest to conduct a proper strategy meeting.

Besides the Werewolves issue, a particular rumor was being discussed by the troops. "Did you know that Thousand Miles Drunk originated from Yueye City? He even did quests in Yeguang Village a long time ago!"

"That explains why he's so ruthless when slaying players. He is from Yueye City, after all!"

"I heard that he was being hunted down in Yueye City yesterday!"

"He must've offended some people in Yueye City and could no longer continue living in it, so he had no choice but to flee to another city!"

“That’s most probably the case!”

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The meeting went on for fifteen minutes, yet they could still not come up with a viable solution. Some players who did not have much stakes in this quest could no longer bear it and called out in unison, “Bosses, why don’t we return to the city and discuss this matter there, instead? Let’s just resume our expedition tomorrow once we’ve come up with a plan.”

A certain mercenary leader received inspiration from this, “Actually, there’s a way to perhaps resolve this! Let’s return to the city, and set off once those Werewolves the Mage mentioned before are back in the village. Will that work?”

“Why don’t you just ask us to circle around this path, instead?”

“Who knows where the Werewolves are hiding? Can we really avoid them by circling around them?”

“Exactly. Where are these Werewolves, anyway?”

“Are we perhaps getting paranoid over nothing? Just because those Werewolves happened to head off for a hunt doesn’t necessarily mean that they are out to get us.”

All turned to look at Oathless Sword when they said this.

“This...” Oathless Sword hesitated before addressing Young Master Han, “Mercenary Leader Han! This information about the Werewolves came from your group. Don’t you think you should perhaps go the extra mile and scout out ahead to confirm the Werewolves’ intention as well as their location within the forest?”

Young Master Han’s expression twitched visibly. Scouting out the Werewolves’ location was fine, but trying to find out the Werewolves’ intention... They were a bunch of monsters for goodness sake! There had been no precedence suggesting that players could interact with this sort of NPCs without resorting to violence!

But since Oathless Sword already said so, Young Master Han did not back off. Simply nodding his head, he said, “Deposit, please.”

Chapter 298 - Wolf's Ear

Everyone who heard Young Master Han's words was stunned, with even a few exclaiming, "What?!"

"Nothing! It's nothing!" Oathless Sword hurriedly said, "You guys are free to do your personal businesses for now. Our friends from Young Master's Elite will scout the path ahead for us!"

Young Master Han merely smiled as the other mercenary group leaders stood up and left. When they were well out of earshot, Oathless Sword quickly said to Young Master Han, "Please keep all our transactions to private chat, bro."

"Sorry. My tongue slipped." Young Master Han was all smiles. All the mercenary groups signed different contracts with Traversing Four Seas. In the case of Young Master's Elite, Young Master Han had demanded a series of unfair conditions from Traversing Four Seas. Oathless Sword had only grudgingly agreed to all those after considering that Young Master's Elite was a group of only six men. But if these conditions were to be exposed to the other mercenary groups, Traversing Four Seas would certainly suffer immense losses, with each of them demanding the same conditions. This was why Oathless Sword almost had a heart attack when Young Master Han mentioned the word 'deposit' in front of everyone.

Putting aside just how much this deposit was, many of the mercenary groups did not even have the condition of receiving additional payment for every extra contribution they performed. Thankfully, none of those mercenary group leaders paid close attention to Young Master Han's 'slip of the tongue', so Oathless Sword was able to send them away with a few words.

Now that it was just him and Young Master Han, the two quickly settled the payment issue. By the time they left the clearing in the forest, the Traversing Four Seas' players and the mercenaries were

already wandering about as if they were here on vacation. Only Gu Fei and the rest reckoned that something was up when Young Master Han did not exit the forest together with the other mercenary leaders, so they waited by the forest outskirts.

When Young Master Han finally emerged, they immediately bombarded him with questions.

Young Master Han had the air of a boss when he beckoned the five toward him. They had no wish to humor him so they all averted their gazes in unison, pretending not to know him.

“Come on over!” Young Master Han lost his patience. As the five men listlessly drew near him, Young Master Han imperiously told them, “You four are not needed.” He then singled out Gu Fei amid the four’s cursing, “You. Go and look for the Werewolves’ location.”

“Where would that be?” Gu Fei asked, dumbfounded.

“Didn’t you say that they are somewhere north of the village? Head over there and take a look; otherwise, we’ll simply carry on with the expedition,” Young Master Han bossily ordered.

Figuring out what this was all about, they eyed Young Master Han disdainfully, “Did you waste all that time coming up with this ‘crappy’ errand?”

“It’s a simple task that can earn us a bit more gold coins; I’d love to see you guys do better,” Young Master Han scoffed.

“Why must it be me, though?” Gu Fei asked.

“We don’t know how a Werewolf looks like! Ha ha ha ha!” Young Master Han replied in elation.

Gu Fei irately spat on the ground before turning around to go.

“Hey! I wanna go with you!” Brother Assist ran after him, briefly explaining, “Information!”

“This... What will you do if anything goes wrong and we need to

retreat?” Gu Fei hesitated.

“It’s fine. You can negotiate with the Werewolves alone. I’ll stay and observe from a distance.” Brother Assist already had everything planned out.

Gu Fei saw no point in persuading him otherwise, so the two of them merely proceeded northward.

Oathless Sword, who was closely watching the six men’s action after assigning the task to them, felt great dissatisfaction when only two men left to do the task. This was because he had paid out a deposit for the service of all six men. Whether they were the best of the best or the worst of the worst out there, headcount would always be an important factor when determining the payment for services rendered. It was just unfair for him to pay for the services of all six men when only two of them would actually be working. Oathless Sword could not bear it any longer and approached Young Master Han to call him out for it, “Leader Han, are you busy?”

Young Master Han was in the midst of opening a bottle of liquor, so the popping sound that echoed about made Oathless Sword jump a little. Young Master Han said, “Don’t worry. That task you’ve assigned us will surely be completed.”

“I know. Both Miles and Brother Assist seemed to have left already,” Oathless Sword emphasized on the word ‘both’ when he said this.

“Yes. I sent the two of them to scout the road ahead, while the four of us will search for clues over by the left and right side of this forest. Everyone, let’s get moving!” Young Master Han motioned for the others to stand up.

The way the three men were sitting on the ground showed that they did not have plans to go anywhere any time soon, but with Young Master Han’s prompting, they quickly stood up. Royal God Call even cleared his throat to say, “Guild Leader Oathless, please be at ease. I guarantee that they won’t dare to slack off with me

around.” Royal God Call projected himself as someone loyal to Traversing Four Seas, yet anyone with eyes could tell where his allegiance truly lay.

“Guild Leader Oathless, we are about to cut through this forest and make our way around, allowing us to cover a radius of several hundred meters with this one sweep. I’m sure you won’t have any issues with that, right?” Young Master Han asked. Before Oathless Sword could reply, he quickly added, “I’ll make sure to inform you at once if we discover anything unusual. Naturally, we won’t charge you anything extra for this. Alright. We will go now.”

With that, the four men left Oathless Sword blankly standing there and entered the forest to begin their ‘search’. He opened his mouth to speak, yet he did not manage to find a chance to do so. He really wanted to know: If the Werewolves were that far away from this road that they were advancing to, then how were those monsters still connected to them?

Ignoring the fact that Young Master Han brought the other three inside the forest to slack off, Gu Fei and Brother Assist were actually responsibly handling the task right now. The two were constantly on the lookout for any movement around them as they continued down the main road. Gu Fei even sought Brother Assist’s advice, “Do you think that those Werewolves I previously helped in my chain quest would know me now that they have turned into monsters?”

“That is really hard to say...” Brother Assist paused, saying, “Technically, they should be able to recognize you if they are still considered as quest NPCs. The problem is that they are currently involved in a different quest, so it’s quite uncertain if they’ll be able to recognize you right now.”

There were two types of NPCs in Parallel World.

One type was the ‘monster NPC’. They were what players usually killed to level in grinding maps. Monster NPCs were essentially

bots that only knew how to fight and did not possess the intelligence to talk with or remember the players.

The other type was the ‘quest NPC’. They were what the game company bragged about as possessing high level of A.I. Quest NPCs were able to identify players’ speech, expression, actions, etc, which allowed them to interact with the players just like real humans. However, there was a limit to their level of interaction. For instance, if a player randomly asked a NPC he or she met on the street: “What’s your m*th*rf*ck*ng surname?!” , the NPC would be able to reply to the question provided that it had a mother-related quest; if it was just a regular NPC without a family background coded into his or her backstory, it would completely ignore the player’s question.

Overall, they were really nothing more than pre-programmed bots. This was precisely why Brother Assist could not tell if the Werewolves would be able to recognize Gu Fei now that they were part of a different quest.

“You can’t tell either, huh,” Gu Fei sighed. If even Brother Assist could not answer this, there was probably no other player out there that could. As he was thinking of this, the system notification for when a friend of his came online sounded. Gu Fei would usually ignore this, but since he was doing nothing at the moment, he casually pulled up his friends list, receiving quite the welcomed surprise. Speaking of the devil himself! Gu Fei hurriedly sent this particular friend a message: “Hi!”

“What?” was the other person’s cautious reply.

“It’s been a long time!” Gu Fei said.

“What did you get yourself into this time?” this person’s skepticism did not recede in the least.

“About that... I want to ask you something!” Gu Fei openly broached the topic. “If I encountered a bunch of NPCs for a certain quest in the past, would they still recognize me now that I am

involved in a different quest?”

“Naturally. Our quest NPCs fully simulate human interaction, which basically makes them similar to living, breathing human beings. Meaning, they are fully capable of remembering past interactions provided they actually occurred. For them to forget about past events just because they are now involved in a different quest, that’s just sloppy programming.”

“Is that so? What about those NPCs that I’ve killed before? Since they are alive once more, will they recognize me or not?” Gu Fei thought back to Yeguang Village’s Adrian. He recalled seeing NPC Adrian by his mansion when he walked past the church before.

“Of course, those won’t recognise you. Although the current NPC shares a name with the past NPC and bears the same task, that NPC is actually an entirely different person. It’s like a job; if a person resigns from his or her position, a new one will replace him or her to perform the same type of work.”

“So that’s how it works! Alright, I got it now,” Gu Fei declared.

“What did you want to ask me about?”

“You already answered it. Thanks a lot!” With that, Gu Fei closed the conversation window.

“Was his question complex enough to warrant my answer?” Fleeting Smile asked himself, “Have I accidentally leaked important information to him again?”

Fleeting Smile was indeed thinking too much. He did not actually provide Gu Fei a hint but reassured the latter that his assumption was correct, instead. Gu Fei along with Brother Assist already thought that that would be the case in Parallel World; they merely lacked first-hand information to prove their belief. With a game employee’s confirmation, why would Gu Fei still have a sliver of doubt?

Gu Fei was now confident that the bunch of Werewolves would

recognize him. And since he was their great benefactor, those Werewolves would not have enmity with him!

Thinking up to this, Gu Fei braced himself and yelled, “Wally, where are you?! Come out!”

“Are you INSANE?!” Brother Assist exploded from shock.

“Relax!” Gu Fei patted Brother Assist.

Following his shout, a figure appeared from behind an old oak tree far ahead. A wolf’s ear definitely lived up to its reputation.

Chapter 299 - The Weakness of Werewolves

The wolf's ear a Werewolf possessed really gave it a keen sense of hearing as it heard Gu Fei's call from over a hundred meters away. Given how loud it could be as well, the ferocious-looking Werewolf's guttural growl caused several figures to appear in the horizon. Standing on hind legs, these Werewolves bounded toward Brother Assist and Gu Fei.

Pale-faced, Brother Assist trembled as he asked, "Are... Are you sure it's safe?"

Gu Fei also felt slightly intimidated by the Werewolves' behavior despite Fleeting Smile's indubitable information and his certainty of the Yeguang Village's Werewolves recognizing him. This was because the Werewolves recognizing him did not guarantee that they would not attack him. Correlation did not mean causation, after all. For instance, Gu Fei knew Silver Moon, yet he would not hesitate to slay the latter from where he stood.

Although these Werewolves owed him a favor, it was hard to say if they would honor it!

This thought caused Gu Fei to involuntarily retreat, which made Brother Assist's already pale face turn ghastly, "You're not thinking of fleeing are you?!"

While Gu Fei could still escape given his current distance from the Werewolves, Brother Assist would certainly be unable to do so. Gu Fei did not wish to be labeled as a disloyal person, so he could only say, "No way. We'll die together if we have to."

Brother Assist did not expect for Gu Fei to easily speak about dying, and he felt disappointed because of this.

The Werewolves' movement speed was definitely far beyond what the players could currently achieve, and this allowed them to surround the two men in the blink of an eye. Gu Fei kept his gaze

trained on the hulking Werewolf, but he felt unsure inside if this was truly the Werewolf headman Wally. Gu Fei only knew of Wally's human form, and now that the latter was in his Werewolf form, any of these similar-looking Werewolves gathered around them could be him.

Gu Fei tightened his grip on the sword as the hulking Werewolf stepped closer to him. He noticed how the Werewolf shrank and changed with its every step, so by the time it reached Gu Fei's front, the Werewolf had already transformed into his human form. The human NPC before Gu Fei was stout and had the exact same look of the Werewolf headman Wally.

Gu Fei sighed in relief. Wally would not revert in his human form if these Werewolves were hostile toward him and Brother Assist; this was something he could tell despite these entities being NPCs.

Indeed, Wally looked at Gu Fei with no hostility in his eyes and even greeted him quite fondly, "Hero."

"What are you guys doing here?" Gu Fei asked.

While the question was something friends would usually ask one another when they met, it was actually an important command that could generate quests when asked toward NPCs. According to unofficial statistics, two questions were considered important when interacting with NPCs. The first one was "What are you doing?" and the second one, which was a follow-up question, was "How can I help you?"

NPCs would usually begin to narrate the quest plot when they heard the first question. In Gu Fei's case, once the surrounding Werewolves heard his question, they started transforming to their human forms and told their current predicament with sadness-filled eyes.

Indeed, these Werewolves were in this location to ambush Traversing Four Seas that was escorting a prisoner, but they had all been coerced into doing this. Their only wish was to peacefully

coexist with the humans, but that had somehow become their Achilles' heel. Someone had once more learned of their secret and used it to blackmail them into stopping the escort team; if they did not do so, the blackmailer threatened to expose their secret to the public.

Although they were not the violent sort, they were still Werewolves through and through and naturally possessed the exceptional combat skills of their kind. Unfortunately, their secret had made it easy for others to exploit them.

Gu Fei sighed and then asked the second question that would trigger a quest, "How can I help you?"

Wally was dumbfounded. "Everything can be easily resolved if we know our blackmailer's identity."

Gu Fei was curious and asked, "Have you guys not seen the person?"

"All we received is this letter." Wally handed over a note to Gu Fei.

Taking it in his hand, Gu Fei scanned through the document. It said: 'Eliminate Todd. If you don't, you and your fellow tribesmen will be in trouble.' The blackmailer had even enclosed a small picture of a group of humans surrounding a Werewolf in the event that the underlying message in his letter was not clear enough. The surrounding Werewolves showed utter fear at the sight of the picture from the note.

Gu Fei was honestly uninterested with the image, but he still asked, "Who is Todd?"

Brother Assist beside him hurriedly replied, "That's the prisoner Traversing Four Seas got out of Yueye City's prison."

"They are trying to silence him!" Gu Fei gasped. Others might not know about Todd's background story of being a corrupt official, but the men of Young Master's Elite were well aware of

this since they had Royal God Call, who was a member of Traversing Four Seas. When Oathless Sword retrieved Todd from the city prison, every Traversing Four Seas member received the guild quest prompt, and once Royal God Call got this, he immediately divulged it to the other five men on their mercenary channel.

Gu Fei waved the note in the air as he said to Wally, “Don’t worry about this matter; I’ll help you solve this!”

Wally felt extremely happy upon hearing this. “That’s wonderful!”

Wally and the other Werewolves had had misgivings regarding Gu Fei before, but his success with the chain quest had earned him their confidence.

A thought flashed through Gu Fei’s mind: If he got Moonlit Nightfalls for completing that quest before, would resolving this matter grant him a similarly amazing reward?

“Probably not,” Brother Assist analyzed, explaining, “It’s not the same quest, after all. Even if the NPCs involved are the same, the reward itself won’t be.”

“Oh. Come to think of it, my quest log doesn’t even show anything,” Gu Fei shared.

“Is this a hidden quest?!” Brother Assist exclaimed.

“If a hidden quest doesn’t even show that it has been undertaken, then how will any player realize that he or she has triggered it?!” Gu Fei retorted.

“That’s precisely why it’s called a HIDDEN quest!” Brother Assist put emphasis on the word ‘hidden’.

“Are you for real?!”

The Werewolves had already been placated by Gu Fei’s acceptance of the quest and had dissolved their earlier

encirclement of the two. However, before they left, the Werewolves told Gu Fei that they would keep a close eye on Todd's movement; if they saw the latter leave their territory, they would not hesitate to strike.

This meant that Gu Fei and Brother Assist's plan to trick the Werewolves into not attacking their expedition as it left via a different route would not work.

"The system isn't that dumb, after all!" Brother Assist chuckled bitterly. As Gu Fei nodded his head in agreement, Brother Assist continued speaking, "But then again that should be how quests are supposed to work! It will be boring if all we have to do is kill everything that stands in our way. The game officials often brag about their so-called 'multiple style of playing the game' aspect."

"Yup!"

"I suspect that crossing those crevasses in the Oolong Mountain Range may have alternate solutions. For example, we may have needed to search for a NPC that could help us build bridges over there. It's just that this guild quest does not have a step-by-step prompt like the normal solo quests people are used to, which resulted in everyone disregarding such a possibility," Brother Assist hypothesized.

"So how should we solve this?" Gu Fei asked, waving the note in front of Brother Assist.

"Let's first head back and talk this over with the others!" Brother Assist suggested.

The two men returned to where most of the expedition had temporarily stopped. Close to a thousand players roamed about leisurely, yet Oathless Sword and the other core members of Traversing Four Seas remained on edge about their guild quest! They waited by the road for Gu Fei and Brother Assist's return, and when they spotted the two, they immediately went to them.

Gu Fei passed the note over to Oathless Sword as he relayed the Werewolves' story to the latter.

This was what every mercenary was duty-bound to do. When mercenaries were tasked to act on behalf of their employers, it was their responsibility to report everything that they had found out, down to the smallest detail, to their employers. This was not something unique to games, either. This was a matter of the player's personal conduct and a person like Gu Fei took this responsibility very seriously.

"So that's how it is!" Oathless Sword took the note and read it over and over again before telling Gu Fei, "Thanks for your hard work, Miles bro. Rest up for now; we'll discuss this matter first to see how we can solve this."

"Sure." Gu Fei quietly backed off.

Oathless Sword, Youthful Reflection, and Gale Force found a secluded area and began a round of intense discussion. But instead of trying to come up with ways to resolve the matter, the three's discussion revolved around the reliability of Gu Fei's information.

Gu Fei might be a responsible mercenary, but others only suspected this to be a false act. Specifically, Youthful Reflection had an extremely prejudiced opinion about Gu Fei and this only clouded his judgment over anything relating to him. As such, right now, he strongly suspected Gu Fei of deceit. "All he got is this note? I could write a hundred of this if you need," Youthful Reflection said contemptuously.

"This doesn't seem to be his handwriting, though..." Gale Force opined.

"How do you know?" The two men eyed him questioningly.

"Uhm... this... well... uhh..." Gale Force was at a loss for words.

Youthful Reflection did not bother pursuing the matter with him and merely continued voicing out his suspicion, "Let's forget about

that. Anyway, Thousand Miles Drunk claims to know those Werewolves and says that that's why they did not make things difficult for him and even let him in on their issue, which happens to be the only solution to our current predicament. Everyone, think; this is a region under Yueye City's jurisdiction. Logically speaking, we players from Yunduan City won't have any opportunities to get to know the Werewolves living in here, so why would the system grant us a quest and have this kind of solution as part of it on the off-chance that someone among us actually knows those Werewolves. If no one here happened to be in that unique position, or in other words, we were not traveling in Thousand Miles Drunk's company, how in the world would we complete this guild quest, then? What sort of reasoning would justify that?"

"That makes sense." Oathless Sword nodded his head in agreement.

"So what's his reason for cooking up all this?" Gale Force took the note and studied it repeatedly.

"I have no idea. Who knows how Thousand Miles Drunk's mind works? I have this gut feeling that this is a trap that that guy has set for us," Youthful Reflection said.

"Trap?! Against us?! No way, right?! Do we have enmity with one another?!" Oathless Sword was shocked. Although they had once intended to settle the score with Thousand Mile Drunk and his mercenary group, those had been nothing but empty words. They had not even taken one step toward such an end, so Young Master's Elite should not have anyone harboring strong resentment toward Traversing Four Seas.

"Anyway, I just don't think we can trust him so easily," Youthful Reflection adamantly said.

"So what do we do?"

"Didn't he say that the Werewolves are just ahead? Let's go over there with a few of our men and try to talk with those

Werewolves,” Youthful Reflection answered.

Chapter 300 - The Search for the Blackmailer

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The three core players of Traversing Four Seas were naturally far more concerned about their guild quest than anyone else, and once their intense discussion ended, Youthful Reflection promptly picked a few members with fast movement speed to join him in scouting the area ahead.

All of them truly had amazingly fast movement speed, leaving like the wind and returning just as quickly. Except... A team of four men left, yet only a pair returned. Youthful Reflection's complexion was deathly pale and Oathless Sword hurriedly asked, "What happened?!"

"We did see the Werewolves," Youthful Reflection said, "But they only trust Thousand Miles Drunk...."

Oathless Sword was dumbfounded. "So he's telling the truth... How is this even possible? Does this mean that we were doomed to fail the guild quest if we did not happen to hire him?"

Youthful Reflection maintained his silence. Was that not the basis of his argument when he questioned the legitimacy of Gu Fei's claim before?

"Where are Xiaosi and Xiaoha?" Oathless Sword asked, after not spotting the other two.

"They're dead," Youthful Reflection answered.

"What happened?!" Oathless Sword was shocked.

"The Werewolves attacked us the moment they saw us, killing the two right off the bat. It's fortunate that I managed to tell them that we were there to help, so they stopped their attacks at the last minute and we avoided suffering the same fate." Youthful

Reflection felt really embarrassed inside. The player beside him shuddered as he was saying all this, his gaze somewhat catatonic. Clearly, the Werewolves' display of ferociousness had traumatized the two.

"I was thinking," Youthful Reflection started speaking again after staying silent for quite some time. "It is still quite improbable for a non-guild member to hold such an important role in completing our quest. I think it's just coincidental that Thousand Miles Drunk stumbled on this role due to his history with those Werewolves, allowing him to be connected to our current guild quest. Surely, there's a way for us to gain the trust of those Werewolves as well; all we have to do is identify that method."

"Why do we have to do all those unnecessary things when we can just follow Thousand Miles Drunk's instruction about locating the blackmailer and killing the person? Even if we won the Werewolves' trust, the goal would still be the same, anyway," Gale Force reasoned.

"I'm just worried that the quest Miles has obtained may have perhaps missed out essential details." Youthful Reflection replied, "Or he may have even withheld important information just so he can extort more gold coins from us."

"That is highly possible!" Oathless Sword's fists shook with emotion as he recalled the devious smile permanently affixed on the face of Young Master's Elite mercenary group's leader. The man was forever trying to extort more money from him at every opportunity ever since they commissioned his mercenary group for this mission. "The fact that the Werewolves only trust Thousand Miles Drunk must not be revealed," Oathless Sword quickly instructed. He was sure that if Young Master Han learned of this fact, the man would use it to extort every coin he had!

"So what do we do now?" Gale Force asked.

Everyone was at a loss. Although they decided to uncover the

person manipulating the strings behind the scene, they just did not know where to begin their search, making them feel somewhat frustrated.

“Looks like it’ll be difficult to continue our journey today,” Youthful Reflection sighed.

Given that they had no leads regarding this particular quest, they could only resort to the most basic method of interacting with the NPCs until they exhausted all possible conversation options. Thus, Traversing Four Seas headed back to Yeguang Village. Forming three-to five-player teams, each team surrounded every NPC villager and engaged them in a conversation.

The mercenaries naturally did not wish to just wait on one place; a few well-intentioned mercenaries even lent Traversing Four Seas a hand, while the rest wandered about in search of monsters that they could fight to stave off boredom. Almost instantly, all the players from Yunduan City were doing something inside or outside Yeguang Village.

Meanwhile, Oathless Sword, Gale Force, and Youthful Reflection went back to Yueye City’s Hall of Mercenaries. They figured that since Gu Fei had come into contact with Yeguang Village’s Werewolves due to a quest he had done in the past, loads of Yueye City players must have done a similar quest. Rather than allowing Gu Fei to give Young Master Han a chance to extort more money from them, it was better to seek out the help of a mercenary group in Yueye City.

Unfortunately, the quest Gu Fei had completed was too high level. Just the main NPC for the quest was a level 70 Werewolf; it could be said that the quest was not something that the current quality of players could trigger, let alone accomplish. In fact, there was not one player in Yueye City who was aware that half of Yeguang Village’s residents were Werewolves. Not one mercenary group contacted Oathless Sword regarding it after he had submitted his recruitment request in the Hall of Mercenaries.

Furthermore, the players inquiring about the quest in Yeguang Village were getting nowhere. The story these villagers had regarding the Werewolves was actually a summary of Gu Fei's actions during his quest; a villager got killed by a Werewolf, and a passing hero discovered the truth of the matter, foiling the plan of that Werewolf....

Some players even directly revealed to these villagers about the existence of Werewolves in their midst, yet they did not receive any sort of response from the NPCs. This was a game, after all, and everything in it was bounded by its encoding and A.I. If the quest-taker, Gu Fei, had been the one to reveal that particular information, his words would have most likely elicit a strong reaction from the NPC villagers. As for these players who had merely obtained the information from Gu Fei, the NPCs only treated their words as nothing but gibberish.

The 'half of the villagers are actually Werewolves' line might trigger a further storyline if Gu Fei were to say it himself, but other players who said it would just be spouting nonsense, otherwise.

None of Young Master's Elite men participated in all the activities happening around them; the five of them were currently seated in Yeguang Village's Tavern, watching everything with indifferent eyes. Brother Assist had gone around the village and just returned to the Tavern. He looked at the five men and shook his head. "This method won't do. No one seems to be getting any sort of information at all."

"Perhaps it is not an issue of the method used but of the person involved. Since the quest is triggered by Miles, maybe only he can extract information from those NPCs," Sword Demon deduced.

"Shall I give it a shot, then?" Gu Fei fielded this question to the group.

"It's fine if you do, but don't be in a hurry to act on it if you do get a lead," Young Master Han ordered.

“Ugh. You’re so evil.” Gu Fei shook his head disapprovingly before heading outside. He naturally knew what Young Master Han was getting at. If this matter was truly something only Gu Fei could resolve, Oathless Sword would most likely be coughing up blood.

As soon as he stepped outside the Tavern, Gu Fei ran toward Chief Edwin’s abode. With how this village worked, he was certain that its residents would just send him over to Chief Edwin eventually. In any case, Chief Edwin was also the first NPC he could think of if he wanted to get information about his quest.

Unfortunately, such an important NPC was not someone the villagers would only reveal to Gu Fei. Those players who had continuously inquired around the village were eventually redirected by the NPCs to Chief Edwin who was living in a three-story house by the edge of the woods. Just outside the village chief’s house, plenty of players were packed like canned sardines, and with everyone clamoring for a chance to speak with him, it was as if Chief Edwin were a superstar and his place were a venue for a fan meeting.

Is there a need for this? Gu Fei was baffled. Everyone could have just chosen a representative to talk with the village chief; why was there a need for all of them to talk to Chief Edwin?

This way of thinking was bred by Gu Fei’s lack of motivation. Just like Young Master’s Elite, many mercenary groups and guilds used the point system to distribute equipment and coins to their members. Group missions and quests like this were the best opportunities for the members to obtain contribution points, so they would naturally not want to miss such a wondrous chance and would even willingly compete with others for it.

Gu Fei was already blocked from entering the premise, and if that was not enough, two Traversing Four Seas players who spotted Gu Fei in the crowd rushed over, “Apologies, Brother Miles. Our guild leader has instructed us to tell you that you don’t need to busy

yourself with this matter anymore given how hard you've worked thus far."

"Oh." This was Gu Fei's only response before he backed off. He was quite happy deep down, though, as Young Master Han's intention to earn a quick buck off of Traversing Four Seas had already been seen through by them that Oathless Sword himself was doing his best to prevent Gu Fei from helping.

Just Traversing Four Seas' words were not enough to stop Gu Fei from helping, though. Still, the underlying meaning behind their statement was rather clear: Since we did not invite you this time, you could lend us a hand, but you would not get paid for it.

Gu Fei did not really care about that, and he simply wanted to do something. However, his desire to help flagged at the sight of the many people surrounding Chief Edwin's house, as it meant that it would take ages before he could talk to the NPC. In the end, he turned to leave.

The other five men felt shocked when they saw him return to the Tavern, "So soon? What did you manage to find out?"

"Nothing," Gu Fei answered, explaining, "Traversing Four Seas said that they don't need my help."

Everyone turned to look at Young Master Han, "Just how much money did you make off of them that they actually sent men to guard the place – as if they were afraid of getting robbed – and gave up such an easy solution for hard labor?"

Young Master Han muttered, "It's not how 'much money'... but how 'many times', instead. I hardly think I'm to blame for that, though; the truth is we are just too outstanding."

Young Master Han's narcissistic statement this time finally included the others, so instead of contradicting him, they actually nodded their heads in agreement. "That sounds about right. We really are just too d*mn amazing."

“The more Oathless Sword doesn’t want us to extort from him, the more I want to make a huge killing off of him,” Young Master Han rubbed his hands together.

“Extort every penny off of him!” Royal God Call did not hesitate to betray his guild leader now that he had spied an opportunity for him to earn a tidy sum off of the latter.

“Miles, who do you think is the NPC pulling the strings?” Young Master Han asked.

“How would I know?” Gu Fei asked back.

“Who was the final boss of your chain quest back then?” Young Master Han rephrased his question.

“Mr. Adrian...” Gu Fei said as shock overcame him, “Could it be the same NPC again?”

“Why would that be the case?” everyone asked.

“Today, I specifically inquired about this. I’ve previously killed Mr. Adrian for my quest, so the current Mr. Adrian, although he bears the same name and look of the man before, is actually a brand-new NPC. But...” Gu Fei recalled Fleeting Smile’s words, “Even a newly spawned NPC will still bear the same task as before, replacing the previous one to continue the same job.”

“What does that mean?” The others did not understand what he meant.

“The previous Mr. Adrian is a villain, so the newly spawned Mr. Adrian will naturally not walk the straight and narrow path. He’s most likely the only NPC around who would blackmail the Werewolves like this,” Young Master Han hypothesized.

Gu Fei nodded his head, “That’s what I think, too.”

“Let’s go find him!” Royal God Call excitedly said.

The six men stood up as Brother Assist walked abreast with Gu Fei, “Where did you hear that from?”

“That... might be a little difficult to answer,” Gu Fei replied as he looked at Fleeting Smile’s name on his friends list. You would be giving me a huge help once more if this quest really did fall onto Mr. Adrian’s lap again.

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